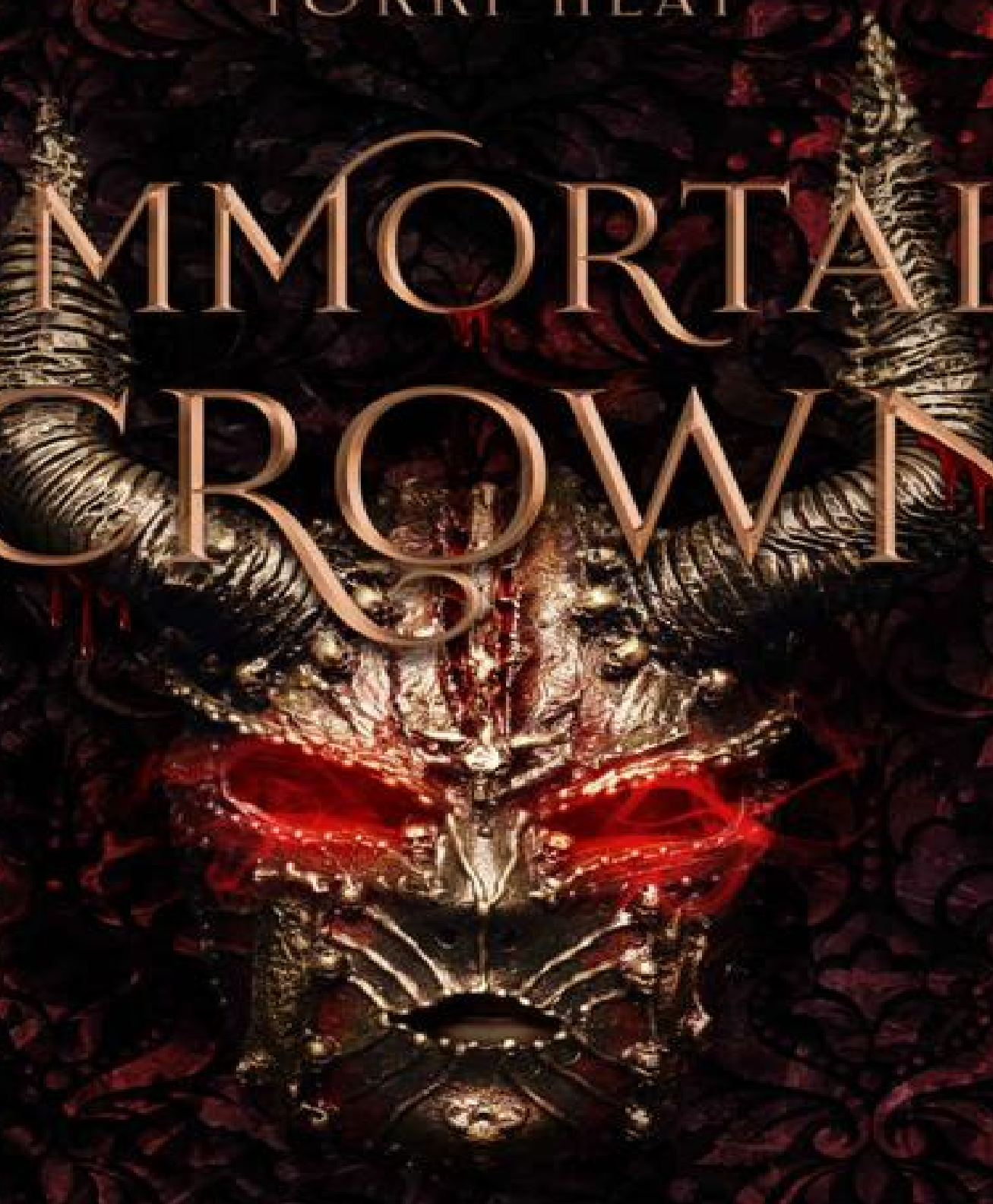
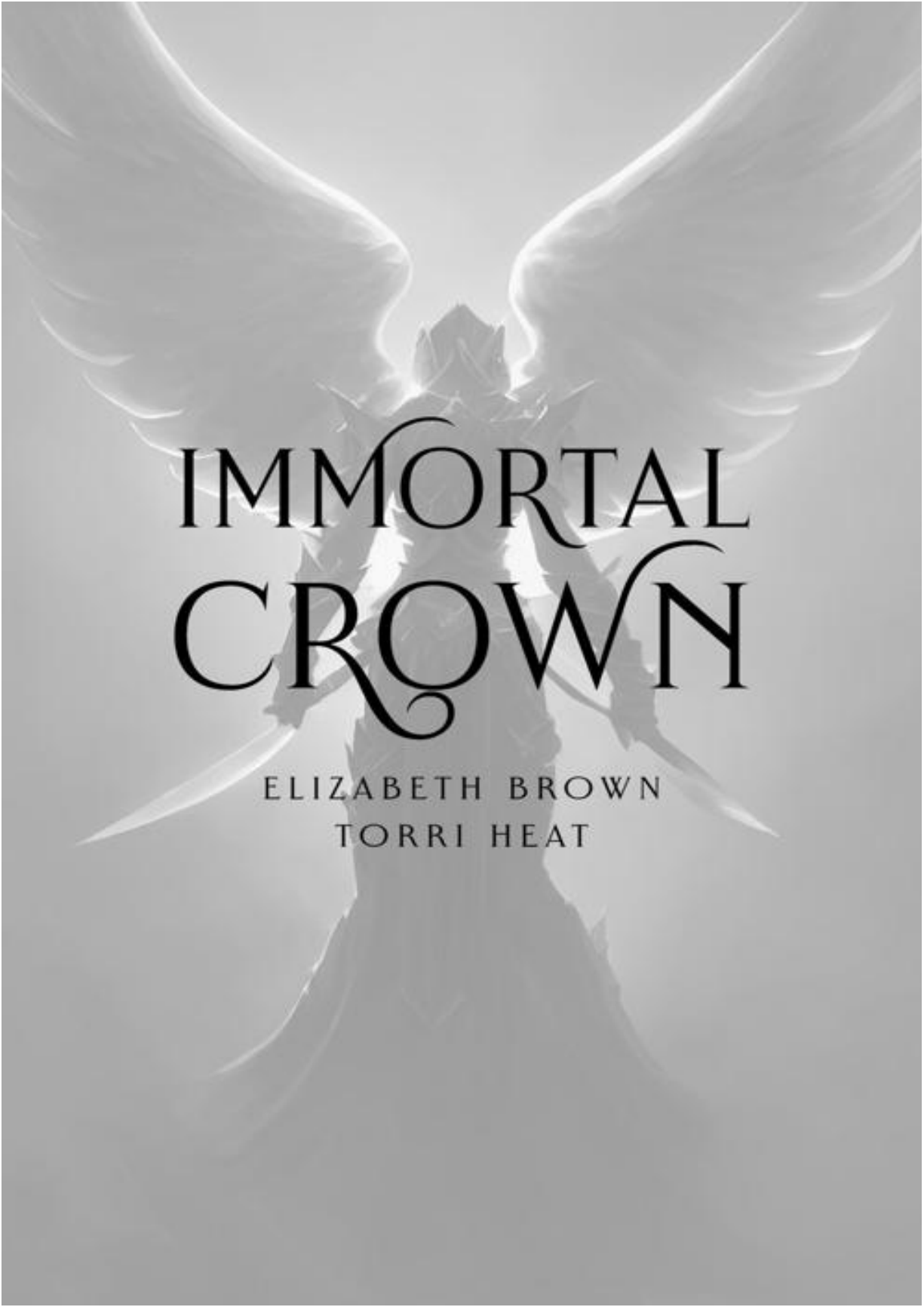


ELIZABETH BROWN
TORRI HEAT

IMMORTAL CROWN

A detailed, metallic crown with two large, curved horns. The crown is adorned with intricate patterns and small, glowing red lights. Two large, glowing red eyes are visible on the front of the crown. Blood is dripping from the base of the crown and from the tips of the horns. The background is a dark, textured surface with a repeating floral or damask pattern in shades of red and black.

MEN ARE IMMORTAL
BUT WOMEN ARE ABSOLUTE



IMMORTAL CROWN

ELIZABETH BROWN
TORRI HEAT

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Torri Acknowledgements

For everyone who said these books were too spicy. We made them spicier for you xo

Beth Acknowledgements

I'm not even remotely sorry. We all know you're reading these books for the smut and not the plot. So...LET THEM HAVE SMUT.

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Trigger Warnings

REFERENCES TO SLAVERY

DEATH

DISMEMBERMENT

GRAPHIC SEX

BLOOD

FIGHT SCENES

DISCUSSION OF RAPE

TORTURE/DISCUSSION OF TORTURE

ANIMAL DEATH

DAIMON EATS QUESTIONABLE THINGS...INCLUDING ANIMALS AND PEOPLE (LOOK HE FELT HIS MATE DIE AND HAS BEEN WITHOUT HER FOR A LONG ASS TIME OKAY, HE'S NOT ENTIRELY THERE ANYMORE, TAKE SOME PITY ON HIM).

IMPRISONMENT

KIDNAPPING

DAIMON LIKES TO KILL THINGS. DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THEY ARE. IF THEY'RE ALIVE, HE WANTS IT DEAD.

WE USE THE WORD FUCK TIMES IN THIS BOOK.

DAIMON ALSO DOES QUESTIONABLE THINGS WITH KNITTING NEEDLES. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF CRAFTING TOOLS.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE AUTHORS ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY...
EXPERIMENTATION...THAT OCCURS AS A RESULT OF READING THIS BOOK. OR ANY
BABIES...DEF NOT ANY BABIES.

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Kingdom Guide

SHAYTAN: THE KINGDOM OF SUCCUBI AND INCUBI. THEIR TRADE WAS ORIGINALLY PEOPLE, UNTIL ASHERA ABOLISHED SLAVERY. THE CURRENT RULER IS ASHERA.

QAMAR: THE KINGDOM OF THE SHIFTERS. THEIR TRADE IS LIVESTOCK. THEY ARE ALSO WELL KNOWN FOR THEIR POWERFUL SHIFTER ARMY. THE CURRENT RULER OF QAMAR IS WINTA, ASHERA'S MATE.

MALAK: THE KINGDOM OF THE ANGELS. THEY GROW AND TRADE GRAIN, AS WELL AS SEAFOOD. THEY'RE OFTEN KNOWN AS BEING NEUTRAL IN WARS AS THEY DO NOT APPROVE OF CONFLICT. CURRENTLY, THE RULER IS JACOBI, ASHERA'S MATE.

JUNIYA: THE KINGDOM OF THE FAE. THE FAE ARE KNOWN AS FARMERS, USING THEIR POWERS AND THEIR TEMPERATE CLIMATE TO PROVIDE THE OTHER KINGDOMS WITH PRODUCE. THE CURRENT RULER IS IVAN, CASPIAN'S FATHER.

MASAS: THE KINGDOM OF THE VAMPIRES. THEY MINE, AND TRADE MINERALS AND OTHER AGGREGATE GOODS. THE CURRENT RULER IS AMBROSE'S FATHER, TOMAS, WHO IS MISSING AFTER LEADING A REBELLION AGAINST ASHERA.

SAHIRA: THE KINGDOM OF THE WITCHES. THEY PROVIDE MEDICINE TO THE REST OF THE KINGDOMS. THEY ARE CLOSE ALLIES WITH MASAS, AS THE TWO SHARE A BORDER. THE CURRENT RULER IS JUDAH, WHO IS MISSING AFTER BEING IMPERSONATED BY HIS TWIN BROTHER.

JAHMAL: THE KINGDOM OF THE GODS AND GODDESSES. THEY ONCE RULED OVER DUNYA, BUT ARE NOW SEPARATED BY THE VOID. THE CURRENT RULER IS KERES.

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Pronunciation Guide

ASHERA: A-SHEER-A

AMBROSE: AM-BROSE

MALACHI: MA-LUH-KAI

JACOBI: JA-CO-BI

CASPIAN: CAS-PI-AN

WINTA: WIN-TA

THORNE: THORNE

JUDAH: JU-DUH

DAIMON: DAY-MON

TOMAS: TOE-MAS

KERES: KEH-REZ

DUNYA: DOON-YAH

SHAYTAN: SHAY-TAN

MASAS: MAH-SAS

MALAK: MAL-LAC

JUNIYA: JU-NEE-YAH

QAMAR: KAH-MAR

SAHIRA: SA-HERE-A

JAHMAL: JA-MAL

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WHAT'S COME BEFORE...

Our journey in Blood Crown begins with Ashera, a succubus queen who rose to power by overthrowing the old reign who ruled on fear and slavery. Ashera successfully staged this coup with her long time friend, and captain of the army, Mal. Unfortunately, during the rebellion, Ashera's mate – Visa – was killed.

Ashera's rule begins with the kings from other kingdoms coming to pledge their loyalties and to make alliances. Through these visits, she is introduced to her mates. Ambrose, the vampire prince. Caspian, the fae prince. Jacobi, the virginal angel king. And even her best friend, Mal, turns out to be one of her mates.

But Ashera's reign is not smooth sailing. She is the first queen Dunya has ever seen, and not only is she a woman, but she freed the human slaves. She made a lot of enemies, and the mate group soon realize that someone wants Ashera dead. Tomas, Ambrose's father and the King of Masas, is leading a rebellion of his own against the succubus queen. A journey to Masas leaves the group empty handed, and an attack on Ashera's life leaves her presumed dead.

They travel down to Qamar, thought to be harboring Tomas, only to find a coup being led on the King of Qamar as they arrive. Ashera quickly realizes that two of the shifters – the new Queen of Qamar, Winta, and her general Thorne, are also her mates, as the rebellion burns the old palace to the ground.

We pick up in War Crown immediately after Blood Crown ends. Our mate group has found safety in Thorne's home, and are using Ashera's

presumed death to their advantage. The plan is to split up, get Caspian's father and the Fae army on their side, to find out where Sahira stands, and to track down Tomas – wherever he may be hiding. Before they can leave, an army from Sahira arrives, and King Judah threatens them with war.

The shifter army takes care of the witch army with help from Ashera, and King Judah is taken into custody. Caspian and Jacobi travel to Juniya, where they realize his father was helping the rebellion all along, and are given the Fae army to take to Masas. The rest of the group travels to Masas, with King Judah in tow. They are met with a battle at the gates to the capital, but with Tomas nowhere in sight. King Judah spots an opportunity to make his move, but at the last moment, a mystery man shows up to behead the witch king. Except he announces that wasn't the witch king, and our beloved Ashera is not just a succubus, but a goddess too...

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CONTENTS

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

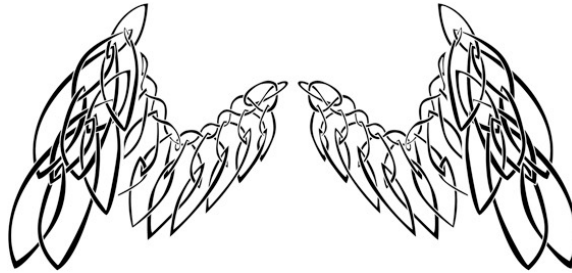
[Chapter 20](#)

[Epilogue - 15 Years Later](#)

[About the Authors](#)

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DAIMON



Five Thousand Years Ago.

“Jareth! Get Ashera out of here! Now!” My scream was lost in the cacophony around us. The ringing of steel against steel, the screams, the battle cries. “Jareth!”

“I’m not leaving you, Daimon.” Ashera’s face was set in a determined mask. Gods, how I loved that look. Usually. Right now, it made me want to rage. We were losing. Our allies were being cut down left and right, slaughtered like animals. I knew that if Ashera was captured, her fate would be far worse than those falling here on the battlefield. Knowing how our enemies operated, I would be forced to watch whatever horrors they concocted unfold.

“We both know what will happen if Keres finds you!” I shouted. “I’m not about to let her get her hands on you. Not now.”

“No,” she asserted. “We stay together.”

Jareth, fucking finally, slid to a stop beside us. He was covered head to toe in blood and grinning like the lunatic he was. I wanted to throttle him. Our mate was in danger, in the middle of a fucking battlefield, and he was off having himself the time of his life killing things. Fucking figured. It was going to be hard enough convincing Ashera to flee, getting Jareth on board as well...

“She’s right, Daimon.” Jareth slapped me on the shoulder, causing me to grunt. “We stay together. If one of us goes down, we all go down.”

My roar ripped through the area as I turned and grabbed what was left of Jareth's shirt. "Don't you get it?" I screamed in his face. "She is the only thing that matters! If we lose her—"

"I know very well what will happen if we lose her." Jareth roared back. "Don't you ever for one fucking second think that I don't."

We stood there, staring at one another, our chests heaving in our rage. It seemed Jareth wasn't playing for once, that he actually knew the stakes. I certainly hoped he felt the walls closing in around us as I did. Felt the fear as it slithered its way around his throat like a noose, the panic blurring the edges of his vision and causing his chest to constrict. While it was true, we'd made a vow to die together, I couldn't shake the feeling that death would be a mercy for all that we'd done. And our enemies were by no means merciful. I doubted they knew the meaning of the word.

"Boys!" Ashera yelled, causing both of us to turn and look at her. "This is my decision." Slowly, Ashera walked over to me and laid a gentle hand on my arm. "I appreciate that you want to keep me safe, Daimon. But we failed. I would rather face punishment together than live without either of you."

"But what if I have to live without you?" I asked, my voice breaking at the thought. Life would lose all meaning without my mate. We had been together for thousands of years now, I wouldn't know where to begin without Ashera and Jareth. The fear tightened even further around my throat, my lungs screaming for air as my chest tightened to the point of pain. My heart thundered loudly in my chest until it was the only thing I could hear.

"I doubt it will come to that," she answered.



"THE CONVOCATION HAS DECIDED to free Dunya and allow it to function on its own. The Void will be fortified so none shall cross. The people of Dunya will be left to their own fates. As for the three of you," Keres turned in my direction. We'd been captured alive after the battle by the Void, and brought before our governing body, the Convocation, for sentencing. Our powers had been stripped, and we'd been shackled with the heaviest chains our captors could find. We took a gamble, trying to free Dunya and its people

from enslavement. We'd held the Void open and directed a mob toward the capital.

At least Dunya was finally free.

"For the act of treason against the Convocation," Keres's voice traveled throughout the room, my heart pounding in my chest and filling my ears with its rapid beat, "the punishment will be thus," – Keres turned to face Ashera, triumph glittering in her dark, lifeless eyes, – "Jareth, you are sentenced to death. You will be reborn with your soul split between the creatures you fought so hard to free."

Tingles shot down my spine, and saliva pooled in my mouth as my panic began to mount. With Jareth's soul split six ways, the likelihood of him finding Ashera and me again when he was reborn was slim. There was every chance that none of his soul fragments would live at the same time, and with the way things were in Dunya right now, there was an even worse chance of those fragments being reborn close to one another. Let alone living long enough to meet each other. He would also be on the other side of the Void, completely out of reach. Fuck.

"Daimon," Keres's voice pulled me out of my panic-riddled thoughts. "You are hereby sentenced to guard the Void. You will be tied to it, unable to leave lest you wither and your powers diminish. Should the Void be breached, your life will be forfeit."

Double fuck.

"Ashera." This was it. The moment I'd been dreading. My mate's punishment.

Pain blasted through my head as the blunt end of a spear slammed into my temple. I could hear Ashera scream my name as if she was miles away and not standing next to me. My knees slammed into the marble floor beneath me as my legs buckled. A guard stood over me, a sadistic grin spread across his ugly face.

"Don't even think about it," he snarled down at me.

I hadn't even realized I'd started to struggle. My instincts screamed at me to protect my mate at all costs. I'd been so focused on Keres, on learning Ashera's punishment, I hadn't even knowingly moved to protect her. Now, several guards stood around me, their spears all pointed at my head.

"As I was saying," Keres continued. "Ashera, as the leader, your sentence is death. Your soul will not be reborn. Instead, it shall remain

imprisoned in the Convocation's dungeon."

Everything inside me rebelled. I wasn't aware I'd moved until the sharp lance of pain in my shoulders alerted me to the fact that the guards were no longer using the blunted ends of their spears. Two of them now braced themselves, shoving the spears with all their might into both shoulders to keep me from rearranging Keres's face. Preferably by removing it entirely. Slowly. With a very blunt object. Possibly with my finger nails.

"Daimon! No." Ashera's command rocketed through me. I slowly turned my head to stare into my mate's eyes. The sorrow and desperation I found there gave me pause. Was she giving up? For a brief moment, rage flared white hot within me. How could she give up? After everything we'd done to get to this moment, she'd give up now? But the longer I stared into her eyes, the more I realized...She wasn't giving up, she was asking me to spare myself.

The little minx was planning something. She had to be.

With that thought in mind, I relaxed my body and hung my head, nodding in acceptance of Ashera's plea. I would wait them out. For her, I would do anything.

"Before we kill you," Keres's voice skittered up my spine, lodging in my head and making me long to dig her eyes out with just my fingernails. "You'll have to tell me how you got Daimon to be so obedient. If he's to be our guard dog, we'll need him to heel when we tell him to."

A snarl built in my throat but was cut off by the sound of flesh slapping against flesh. My head snapped up – my eyes wide with shock – to see Ashera now standing directly in front of Keres, her hand raised and Keres's head turned to the side with a red handprint on her cheek.

I fought to keep my lips from twitching. My mate had actually struck the head of the Convocation. I hadn't realized I could love her more, but I did at that moment. Who knew having your mate defend your honor would make you want to bend them over and make them choke on your cock for a few hours? Then make them come over and over again until they were too weak to do anything but sob your name? All while your enemies watched. Bleeding or lifeless, it didn't matter so long as all eyes were on the glory that was Ashera, impaled on both me and Jareth.



FIGHTING for one's life while running away wasn't going quite the way I'd envisioned. When Inara—a demon guard and spy within Keres's household—had approached me saying that Ashera was still alive, almost twenty years after her sentencing, in the dungeons, being tortured endlessly by Keres herself. That she knew how to get Ashera out and through the Void, I hadn't hesitated. If there was a chance I could get my mate out of Jahmal alive, I would do it. Unfortunately, Inara had confirmed what I'd already felt through the mate bond several years ago. Jareth was dead. I felt when he died and his soul had been ripped into several pieces. My soul had fractured along with his.

Ashera, Jareth, and I had been together for so long that our souls had actually intertwined. I couldn't even begin to imagine the pain and torment Ashera went through when she felt the bond shatter. Ashera was our center, but over time, we'd been able to feel each other, taking strength from our group as a whole. What I'd felt would have been a mere echo of what Ashera had gone through. For her to still be alive, despite what Keres sentenced her to, was abhorrent. Twenty years of torture and facing potentially centuries more before finally being granted death, only to then face an eternity trapped without the ability to be reborn.

No.

My guardianship over the Void these past twenty years had hardened my resolve to find a way to free my mate, find the pieces of Jareth's soul, and destroy Keres. I would orchestrate Ashera's rise to power, and ensure that she would rule over all of Jahmal and Dunya. Inara had just presented me with the opportunity to set my plans in motion.

Except, getting Ashera and Inara to the Void and then through it wasn't going exactly as I planned. I probably shouldn't have gouged out the guards' eyes. I touched my pocket to make sure that the ten sets of eyes were still there, relief surged when I felt the bulge they created in my cloak. I wanted to keep trophies of all Keres' minions I was able to kill or lure to the Void as a meal.

"Daimon!" Ashera's pained cry slammed everything in and around me to a halt. I whipped my head back to see Ashera and Inara drenched in blood, which wasn't that alarming considering we'd had to fight for every step taken toward the Void. The Void was now so close I could almost touch it. No. What was alarming was the gaping hole in Ashera's side, and the

fact that she was dragging a nearly unconscious Inara with what little strength she had left.

I'd been so absorbed with fighting through to the Void I hadn't even thought to look back. Horror slithered down my spine. How could I possibly not think to look back to see if my mate was okay?

"Get to the Void!" I screamed as I circled around her, my eyes frantically searching for any threat. "Go, Ashera!"

An arrow whistled past my head and the sickening sound of it squelching into flesh met my ears. Ashera's rasping gasp had me spinning to face her, my wings flaring out protectively. As though in slow motion, her legs gave out, the arrow still shaking and lodged deep in her spine.

My roar echoed around us as I scooped her and Inara up. They couldn't die in the Void. If they died in the Void...they wouldn't be able to reincarnate. Their souls would be trapped there. Panic had my wings pushing my legs to move faster.

Ashera's shaking hand gently slid against the skin of my cheek. I didn't take my eyes off the Void. We were crossing the border, passing through the hauntingly still space of land that lay within the Void when she spoke.

"Daimon. I love you." Her voice was wet and reedy. My heart stopped, but I forced my legs to keep going. If she died in Dunya, she would be reborn there. I could make it.

"You're not dying here, Ashera." My voice wavered. "If you're going to die, you'll do it in Dunya so I can find you again. Don't give up now."

"I would never give up on you, Daimon." Her breath shuttered. Her eyes closed.

I was running out of time.



FIVE HOURS AGO

I woke from my troubled slumber by hitting the hard wooden floor beneath my bed. *Fuck's sake*. Blinking myself awake, I got to my feet.

Another fucking day in paradise. Another fucking day of my eternal punishment.

For the first time that day, but definitely not the last, I thought of her. Ashera. The gods only knew how much she crossed my brain since the first day I realized she'd reincarnated. She was now thriving, flourishing amongst her mates. Well...most of them anyway. Her bonds weren't complete, not yet. She hadn't found all the pieces of Jareth's soul. But I had faith in her. They were all in place now, I could feel them. Our old mate bond flicked in my chest, a warm light in my otherwise dark existence. Even Inara, the guard that had helped Ashera escape, had been reborn—twice. She was also with Ashera.

I'd thought they'd both died in the Void, despite everything I had done to assure otherwise. I'd buried their bodies along the boundary and mourned. And then, I felt her. Her rebirth had blazed through my being like a wildfire in a dry forest. For the first time in thousands of years, I could breathe. My very reason for living had made it through the Void. Ashera. My mate. I had felt her come back into her power - an impossibility, surely. But there she was, on the edges of my frazzled consciousness. A gift and a curse.

I made sure to keep a close eye on her as she grew. Her mother in this life, a succubus of little importance, had died in childbirth. I'd found my tiny newborn mate alone and screaming in hunger. Once I'd fed her, I brought her back to the forest of the Void. I couldn't raise her myself, it would bring too much attention—attention Ashera didn't need until the time was right. So I'd left her for a human family to find. I hadn't anticipated the raid on her village, and by the time I caught wind of what happened, it had been too late. She'd been taken by the local incubus lord.

As much as I wanted to go to her then, I knew I couldn't. It wasn't the right time. She'd need to have most, if not all, of her mates with her before I approached. She needed to rediscover who she was. So I watched. I watched and I waited for the time to be right. The number of times I had wanted to take her into my arms and reassure her that everything would be okay but had to stop myself was unquantifiable. I wanted to kiss her sweet brow and run her golden hair through my fingers.

I wanted *her*.

Sometimes she was all I could think about. Except for now, when my stomach growled. A funny joke to Keres and her lackeys, one she hadn't mentioned when sentencing me. Make me live on the edge of the Void as an immortal god, but with the needs of a human. I craved the same things they

did – food, sex, love, sleep. It was a pain in my fucking ass most days. I was sure Keres sat up there on her gilded throne, the throne that should be Ashera's, and laughed at our expense.

Only one thing kept me going, the knowledge that Keres had no idea Ashera was still alive. Because if she knew, she would stop at nothing until Ashera and everything she cared about was destroyed. Had Ashera been allowed to rule in Keres's stead, none of the current infighting in Jahmal would be happening.

My stomach was roaring its displeasure, and I had no more time for such thoughts. I threw on my tunic, still blindingly white even though it was the only thing I had worn in centuries. We had to maintain appearances after all. It simply wouldn't do for a god to be seen in less than impeccable condition. Dressed and ready for the day, I stepped out of the small shack I called home and made my way deep into the Forest of the Void, the large swatch of trees that caressed the Void on Dunay's side.

The land that surrounded the Void was beautiful and lush, filled with rich forests and the sound of animals everywhere. Being so close to Jahmal meant this area was fertile and teeming with life. It also meant most mortals stayed away from the area unless called. The magic that kept the land so vibrant was the same magic that kept people far, far away. It didn't sit right with them. A hunter might step foot into the forest, following the bright orange fox tail they had been tracking for miles, only to remember they needed to be home for dinner. Simple, really, but complex magic laced through the simplicity. The Void was an autonomous entity. One that was predictably unpredictable.

This wasn't to say that people didn't trespass. They did. Otherwise, I would be out of a job. Keres knew the lassitude associated with this punishment was far more tortuous than anything she could do to my physical body. Despite that, I had still turned one or two lost souls away from the Void over the years, sending them on their way thinking our encounter had been little more than a dream.

These small experiences weren't enough to keep me alive. In fact, I had found Ashera twice before I had spoken to her. Each time, I found my voice unable to work when I tried to call out to her. The third time my words had come out in a whisper, because how did you say, "You're my mate, oh and by the way, you're a god, and we had a third mate but now he's dead. I love you, come home." That was a mouthful, to say the least.

After I ate this morning, I was off to find her again. Ashera. Ashera and her mates. There were so many of them now, although I wasn't surprised. She had nearly all the pieces of Jareth's soul, gaining more power with each mate she claimed. I could never stay long when I found her because my soul was tied to the Void. But those small moments with her...they were everything to me. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a quick movement. Something scurried across my vision, and I darted to follow it. *A squirrel.* A.k.a., breakfast. With one sharp lurch, I jumped forward and grabbed the squirrel in one hand. Stomach growling, I brought the squeaking creature to my mouth and popped it in whole. Blood squirted everywhere, staining my hands as the raw meat soothed my angry body, filling me up with substance for another day without my mate by my side. I chewed, contemplating my next move, and swallowed the squirrel in one hard gulp. I could sense where Ashera was on the outskirts of my mind, although I couldn't quite tell what she was planning on doing next. Some parts of her were still a mystery to me, since we hadn't formed the mate bond. We would need to relearn each other; something I was looking forward to. She was in Masas, along with most of her mates, and it felt like a battle was taking place. The why was fuzzy. Wiping my hands on my tunic, I glanced down at the white fabric. Still white, not a sign of blood in sight.

There was something to be said for maintaining appearances. I took a deep breath, and let my body dissipate into the wind, following Ashera's pull wherever it would take me.



Ashera

SURE. This was normal. I could definitely, totally, one hundred percent believe what had just been said to me. Except...

"What the *fuck* did you just say?" I asked.

Daimon smirked, and something dangerous flashed across his eyes – something a bit more than just playfulness like I was used to with most of my mates. "I said your mates were about to arrive with Juniya's forces."

I shook my head, clinging to Thorne. "No. After that."

“The fact that you’re a god? Don’t tell me you hadn’t already figured it out by now. You’re smarter than that, Ashera.” He shrugged his shoulders with a smirk before biting into the heart that was still in his hand, a hint of his fangs flashing in what I assumed was wicked glee. The heat in his eyes scorched along my body as he slowly dragged his gaze down and then back up. Our gazes locked once more and held.

My chin snapped up, shooting daggers at Daimon’s smug face. “Excuse me?”

“Shit, now he’s done it,” someone muttered behind me. I had bets on Ambrose, but I couldn’t be certain because the sound of blood rushing to my head was flooding my ears.

Daimon continued to smile while he chewed like he had no idea what kind of grave he was digging himself. “Come on now, goddess.” He took another bite, the heat in his eyes remaining but taking on a challenging tint. Daimon then suggestively licked his lower lip.

I blinked once. Twice. Was I really about to take on a god? But then, if he was to be believed, I was a god too. *And apparently should’ve realized it without him telling me.* Something else was flooding through my veins though, something I hadn’t felt since Winta and Thorne. A knowledge that Daimon, this *god*, was my mate. Did he feel it too? Did he know? The smirk on his face, and the way he ate that heart told me he did.

Ambrose piped up again, “Was I this stupid when I first met her?”

“Yes,” all of my other mates responded without any hesitation.

“You still are,” Thorne quickly followed up. This was immediately echoed by the rest of the men around me, causing me to chuckle. I could feel Ambrose’s irritation spike at the comment and bit my lip to keep from laughing.

“Am not,” he grumbled, sounding petulant.

“It’s okay, princess,” I assured, not taking my eyes off Daimon. He’d eaten about half the heart by now, and surprisingly wasn’t completely covered in blood. “You’re perfect just as you are. A precious, grumpy little gremlin.” Ambrose would make me pay later for that comment, but I was sure that punishment would be enjoyable for both of us. If I was right, the others would watch and not touch for their snickering.

I turned my full attention back to Daimon and realized that I had a decision to make. I could either let this go, or I could show him who he was messing with. I wasn’t the kind of woman to let this go.

Before I could move a muscle Malachi laid a calming hand on my shoulder. I could feel his touch even through my leathers, the same reassuring grip I remembered through countless battles. The touch of my rock, the male that out of all my mates centered me the most. I shouldn't have been surprised when my body almost immediately relaxed a fraction, yet I was. We'd been through so much already, but the knowledge that Malachi was mine—finally—would most likely never get old.

"Sher," he murmured, and I tilted my head, keeping Daimon in my sight, but letting Mal know that I was listening. "As much as I would love to see you kick a god's ass - and I would really love to see that - you need to feed. We still need to secure the city and you've expended a lot of power."

I sighed. I knew he was right. I knew my body would never hold up in any further battles today without extra strength, even with Thorne and I solidifying the mate bond. I leveled Daimon with a hard stare.

"We'll finish this later." He just smirked and popped the last bit of not-Judah's heart into his mouth. I wasn't sure how to feel about that being the most normal – albeit extremely hot – part of our interaction.

"Long may she reign," Daimon responded with an incline of his head.

"Sher." Mal's voice had me turning to face him, though I kept Daimon in sight out of the corner of my eye. "Let's get you healed and fed. We need to finish this battle. Jacobi and Caspian are out there trying to get to us."

Right. My mates.

At the mention of my wound, my back throbbed. Shit. I was just stabbed. Ambrose moved over, placing himself between me and Daimon with his back to the god. Bold move. Pride surged through me. He wanted to show he didn't feel threatened by Daimon.

"You'll need blood to help you heal." Ambrose's voice was low. His eyes flashed a deeper red as his lips quirked up. "Here." He tilted his head to the side and gestured to his neck.

My fangs descended without thought. The last time I fed off blood, I'd been mortally wounded. My current injury wasn't life-threatening, not-Judah – the fucker – had terrible aim. Regardless, the injury would slow me down, and we needed to finish up here as quickly as possible. If the man Daimon killed wasn't Judah, we would need to figure out where the real Judah was at a later date. That couldn't happen until we had successfully secured Masas.

Without much thought, I slid my body along Ambrose's and allowed my fangs to pierce his neck. Warm, fragrant blood flooded my mouth causing me to moan in appreciation. I felt my wounds stitch together, slowly at first but picking up speed the more of Ambrose I swallowed. His hands gripped my hips, grinding his erection into me. I moaned again.

Unwittingly, I released my grip on my empathic abilities and could feel how impacted my mates were, Daimon too. Heat raced down my spine and pooled between my legs, turning me almost feral against my vampire's neck. I started to pull from that energy, but I knew it wouldn't be enough. I'd need to maul one of my mates again before finishing this battle and securing Masas.

Gentle hands pulled me from a blissed-out Ambrose and turned me to face Mal. My rock. Winta slid closer as well, with Thorne moving in to help support the semi-drained vampire.

"We'll take care of you, precious," Winta assured me. Gods, I loved her voice.

"That's right, Sher. We'll make sure you get what you need." Malachi leaned down to press a kiss to my throat, dragging his teeth along the oversensitized flesh there. More heat pooled between my legs, and my hands came up to grip his shoulders. "Down on your knees."

I obeyed the command without thought, Winta sinking to her knees behind me. Mal slowly pulled out his cock, already hard and leaking, fire burning in his eyes. My dragon slid one hand up my top and the other down my pants, but she kept her hands away from where I needed them most, choosing instead to gently stroke my overheated flesh. I released a low growl before encircling Mal's cock in my hand and pulling it to my mouth.

"That's it, little slut. Suck me good and I'll tell Winta that she can make you come." Mal's hands tangled in my already knotted hair, his nails digging in enough to send tingles racing down my spine.

Releasing a low hum, I ran my tongue along the tip as I ran my gaze up his body. He was the one mate that I hadn't been able to immediately have. We'd spent so long running circles around each other making each time we came together explosive. I had hundreds of years of pent-up longing for this male. And gods, the things I wanted to do to him, and have him do to me. Once we secured Dunya...

"Wrap those pretty lips around Mal's cock, precious." Winta urged in my ear. Her teeth nipped at my shoulder, causing me to shudder. "Let's put

on a little show. Teach that so-called god what it means to *really* be a goddess. Show him how powerful women truly are by bringing this large warrior to his knees.”

Excellent idea. My lust–blood and sexual–still surged through my veins. My fangs were still down as I smirked up at Mal, making sure he could see them, before wrapping my lips around the head of his cock. My hands came up, one wrapping around his base and the other gently squeezing his balls.

“Fuck, Sher,” Mal groaned. His fingers flexed in my hair as he applied pressure to my head, trying to get me to take him deeper. My hand around the base of his cock squeezed harder, forcing a snarl from his lips.

I wanted to resist and play with him more, but there was a tiny voice in the back of my mind that reminded me we were in the middle of a battle and I’d already paused to get thoroughly fucked by one of my other mates. I couldn’t take the time I wanted right now. I needed to feed–and feed well–before I crushed our enemies.

“That’s it,” Winta praised. The hand up my top slid so her fingers were circling my nipple. My breath stuttered for a moment before I worked my mouth further down Mal’s length, pumping my hand as I did. “I could smell how wet you got when Thorne called you a good girl,” she taunted. “Does our queen enjoy being a little cum slut and praised for it?”

Shit. I had no idea Winta was such a dirty talker. I moaned against Mal’s cock, causing him to groan. The hand down my pants toyed with my clit, grazing it lightly, not giving me the real friction I needed. I wanted to snarl, but Malachi’s grip on my hair tightened further as he started to thrust into my mouth. I moved my hands to brace against his thighs, knowing it was best for me if I just held on as he used me for his pleasure.

“Stop thinking, my little cum slut. Just take my fucking cock like a good girl,” he growled. “Winta, you don’t let her come until she’s sucked me dry, understood?”

I felt Winta nod behind me. Her tongue flicked out to taste the skin behind my ear. “You heard him, precious.”

My eyes fluttered shut for a moment before I locked my gaze on Mal’s again. As much as I wanted to challenge him, I knew I needed this. I let my acceptance shine through. He rewarded me by shoving his cock down my throat and holding it there until I swallowed around him. Winta also rewarded me by pinching my nipple and flicking my clit.

I heard someone release a low snarl. I couldn't be sure, but it sounded like it might have been Daimon. Let him wait. I wanted Malachi to explode on my tongue while I exploded around Winta's fingers. The sexual energy around the three of us was quickly restoring my once flagging energy and helping to cool my blood lust enough that I could appreciate what was happening.

My demon's thrusts became rougher and more demanding; Winta's fingers started to work me faster. My mind was overwhelmed by the sensations the two of them created, riding the cresting wave of pleasure as Mal and I hurtled toward oblivion.

"So fucking good, Sher." Malachi snapped his hips against my face again as I moaned around him. Winta started whispering praise in my ear as she slipped two fingers into my pussy, her thumb still rubbing against my clit. "Faster, Winta."

She complied, working me faster. Tears started to trickle down my face as Mal continued to thrust down my throat, our gazes still locked. He had a wicked smirk on his face, clearly enjoying treating me like a fuck toy in the middle of a battle.

"She's almost full," Daimon growled. I hadn't realized he was so close, but the thought of him watching us aroused me more than I wanted to admit. "Keep feeding, goddess."

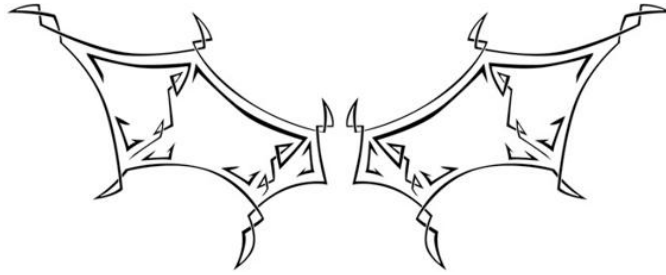
Neither of my mates acknowledged Daimon, too immersed in our little bubble and getting me well fed to entertain anything he had to say. But he was right. I was almost full. I felt brimming with energy, ready to take on the world.

"Now," Mal snarled as he slammed back into my mouth and held my face against his hips coming down my throat.

Winta leaned in and bit my neck with elongated fangs. I shattered with a strangled scream around Mal's cock; my eyes fluttered closed as I relished in the feelings for a moment, knowing that we couldn't take time after this to bask in what had just happened.

Slowly, Mal pulled himself from my mouth, his thumb wiping away the small amount I hadn't been able to swallow and had dribbled out. Winta removed her hands, and I could hear her suck on her fingers with a moan. If this wasn't enough reason to end Tomas...

MALACHI



I wasn't even sure where to begin. Sher had mated with Thorne. This psycho, Damion, was telling us that Ashera was a goddess, and I just had one of the best blowjobs of my life. Not to mention there was the dead body of not-Judah sprawled beside us. I guess, all in all, this was a pretty normal day for us.

I adjusted my leathers and scrubbed my hand over my face. "Let's put a pin in the whole goddess thing, just until we aren't in the middle of a war." I turned back to Ashera. "Can you tell how far away Jacobi and Caspian are?"

Ashera tipped her perfect, golden chin to the sky. She could have been a statue carved from the precious metal, another decoration in this ice-cold city. "They should be here any minute."

We could all sense each other through the mate bond, but our sense of each other wasn't as strong as Ashera's. From her estimation, we had very little time to prepare.

I jumped into commander mode without another thought. "Damion. Are you sticking around?"

Damion shot a hungry glance toward Ashera, licking his perfectly full lips. "For as long as I can."

From my left, Thorne grumbled. "Now I understand why the fanged fucker didn't want me to stick my dick in Ashera, how am I supposed to compete with a fucking god?"

I rolled my eyes. "We can have a group therapy session later. Damion, I'm going to need you to guard the north side of the city. Ashera and

Ambrose can wait at the gate for the Juniyan forces. I'll go through the buildings and make sure there are no stragglers that want to escape. Thorne and Winta can handle the shifter army."

We all glanced at each other before nodding, no one questioning my command. I was surprised Daimon went along with it, but I wasn't going to debate it just then. We needed to secure the city. Ashera had created a large enough crevasse to keep the enemy forces at bay for the time being, but we were going to need to fight our way through to our designated spots. Ashera could fly Ambrose to the gate. Daimon could fly as well. Unless Winta shifted into her dragon form, she and Thorne were on foot. Admittedly, I wasn't as concerned about the shifters. Their animal forms would be able to handle things quickly if needed.

I grabbed Ashera by the back of the neck, slanting my mouth across hers. "Let's kill these assholes."

The corners of her lips tipped up as she nodded. "Yes, sir."

"Careful," I growled. "I might just make you call me that from now on." I couldn't ignore the blood rushing to my cock with those simple words, and if we had more time, I would've had her call me that before her pretty mouth was wrapped around my dick again.

Ashera untangled herself from me and moved over to Ambrose, the scent of her arousal perfuming the air once again. Gods, she was absolutely delicious. "Promises, promises, demon." With that taunt, she wrapped her arms around Ambrose, who held her close and shot into the air. I was going to kill every single vampire who stood in my way for one reason only – they were preventing me from fucking my mate into next week. In my mind, that was reason enough for death.

"Winta, Thorne," I stopped the two shifters from leaving as Daimon also shot into the air. "Try to keep one or two alive. We need to find out where Tomas is and what he's planning from here."

"Understood," Thorne responded. He'd been one of the greatest generals Qamar had ever seen before becoming Winta's co-ruler. I knew I could trust him to do anything Ashera would need done. Thorne grinned at Winta, slapping a hand across her back. "Dirty hippo?"

I paused, mid-turn. "I'm sorry, what?"

Winta laughed. "It's a maneuver we developed in training. Haven't used it in years, but we're on foot so might as well."

I shook my head. “Okay, well as long as you leave a vampire alive, I’m on board with the dirty rhino.”

“*Hippo*,” Thorne muttered. “It’s the dirty hippo.”

Not bothering to respond, I untucked my wings and took to the skies. It didn’t take long to find one of the towering housing complexes. I could care less about the majority of the bloodsuckers, but there were still children – as weird of a concept as that was – and innocents who didn’t deserve to get hurt in the crossfire of this battle. Ashera would never forgive herself if a child lost their life for what she considered to be her war. We wouldn’t allow such a thing to happen, but what my beautiful queen always forgot was that this wasn’t just her war. It was all of ours. We would do anything for her, and her battles were ours, no questions asked. But this, what Ashera stood for, freedom, equality, and respect for all people, that wasn’t a war. There wasn’t a question underlying the fight, a right side and a wrong side. It was simply the way it should be. Tomas would be brought to justice, and the people would be free to live their lives.

I landed with heavy feet on the first rooftop, and jumped down to the ground. Inside the decadent, over the top home was what looked to be an extended family. A mother and her children sat huddled on a couch together, a man standing stiffly behind them. An older couple sat on chairs opposite them. I didn’t bother knocking, shouldering the door open. As I entered, the man leapt across the couch, getting between myself and his children. His lips curled into a sneer, a low growl tearing from his chest. He was willing to die for his children; he had my respect for that. I held my hands up in the air. “I’m not here to hurt you. I’m here to help you to safety should you so choose.”

The vampire’s face softened into confusion. “You would do that?”

“We aren’t here to hurt you,” I repeated. “I’m not sure what you’ve been told about us, but we’re here to help.”

He watched me carefully, but didn’t relax his defensive stance.

I jerked my chin up at him. “Take your family and go.”

With a quick nod toward me, he gathered up the youngest children, while the woman pulled the oldest to his feet. I watched them dart out the door, taking off for the city gates. *What the hell had Tomas told his people about us?*

Except they weren’t his people anymore. We were going to win this fight – that much was clear. Then the vampires would be Ambrose’s people,

won fair and square. It shouldn't have come down to a battle between father and son, but maybe that was better for Ambrose. To feel the cool cut of their relationship, instead of constantly looking over his shoulder for his father's approval. I wouldn't know, having never known my own father, but for Ambrose, a cutting of ties seemed best. Especially after everything that Tomas put him and the rest of us through.

I would try and talk about it with him later, if he would talk. You could never tell if the princess wanted to open up, but like it or not, we were his family now. Wasn't that why we were here in the first place? The core of our war centered on family, and ensuring everyone in Dunya could keep theirs safe.

I watched the family as they ran – related by blood, but no more of a “real” family than we were. We were doing the right thing here. Of that I was certain. I ducked out of the door and moved onto the next house. I would make sure every family and every child in this godsdamn city was safe. Ours included.



Jacobi

MY MATE WAS HEADING in my direction, my gaze searched the skies looking for any hint of golden wings. I could feel the pull of the bond as Ashera got closer, Ambrose with her. I glanced over at Caspian, who was also scanning the skies. We were close to the gate that would grant us entry into Masas's capital city. There were vampires preventing us from just waltzing into the city, but our forces were larger and appeared to be better trained. This wouldn't take long.

“That fanged fucker had better keep her safe,” Caspian grumbled as he cast one last look at the sky before returning his attention back to the battle before us. “All of those assholes had better make sure that not a single hair on her head has been harmed. Or I swear—”

“Easy,” I urged, placing a comforting hand on his shoulder. I liked to think that during our travels we'd come to understand one another better, and had—dare I say it—formed a bond. If anything I'd gained valuable insight

into Caspian's character. "I know you can feel the bond. Focus on that. She's fine. If anything happens to her, I'll make sure you're aware."

He stopped and cocked his head to look at me. Our gazes clashed for a moment before his face turned thoughtful. "I appreciate that."

I studied him for a moment longer before removing my hand from his shoulder. I had little doubt that the coming trials and tribulations would bond all of us into a tight-knit, unbreakable group. I just hoped that Caspian wouldn't need to go about that the hard way, stubborn asshole that he was. "Let's go get our mate."

With a determined nod, Caspian strode off, shouting commands to our forces.

We're coming Ashera.

The thought echoed in my mind as I cracked my neck before throwing myself into the fray. I had never been one for battles. Angels were notoriously neutral in all of Dunya's major battles. For her, I would fight. What she stood for, I would slaughter any who stood in her way. She was everything to me, and what she was fighting for was everything to her people. I would fight, and I would win.

That was what love was, wasn't it? I slammed my shoulders into the first vampire that came running at me, taking my sword to his throat. For a moment, I felt the tiniest bit of guilt, empathy for what that man might have once been. Then I remembered where I was, and what they had done to my mate, and Ambrose. Maybe he wouldn't be so much of a dick if he hadn't grown up in such a mess.

Across the battling vampires and fae, I heard Caspian laughing as he watched me. "Sorry," he called. "It's just too funny to watch your face as you kill these assholes."

Jerk. I threw my shoulders back and ignored whatever else Caspian shouted at me. I knew why I was doing this, and that was a good enough reason for me. To hell with everyone else.

This was for her.

For love.

With a roar, I pushed back through the small crowd of vampires and dropped them all where they stood. I wasn't sure I was an angel anymore, but who I was now might be even better.



Ashera

THERE WEREN'T AS many vampires at the gates to the city as I thought there'd be. This whole battle had seemed off, as though Tomas didn't really care if he lost his country to his son. Which couldn't possibly be true, could it? Tomas had orchestrated an entire resistance to my reign, had me kidnapped, and even gone so far as to attempt—several times—to have me assassinated. It felt wrong that he would just hand his kingdom over to us like this. Something wasn't adding up.

"This isn't like my father," Ambrose muttered as his feet touched down on the cobblestoned road that led to the gates. "He would have mustered or threatened everyone in this kingdom. He would have known what we were up to. He's been almost several steps ahead of us this entire time. Why, now, does it seem as though he's lost?"

"You helped convince a lot of your people, Ambrose," I argued, though it sounded hollow. "Perhaps he's running low on resources?"

"You don't get it Ashera," he growled, running a hand through his hair. My vampire started to pace as the sounds of battle raged in the background. "He plays the long game. While he might not actually be an original, he is one of the oldest beings in Dunya. A fact I'm sure Daimon will happily confirm for us later."

I gently placed my hands on his bare shoulders. His perfect, snowy skin was now marred by smears of blood, dirt, and ash. My heart panged knowing that some of that blood belonged to Bradford. Yet another thing we had to deal with, but I wouldn't push him. I wouldn't force Ambrose to discuss what had happened with the shifter soldier in depth. Not until he was ready.

"Why don't we focus on securing the city?" I suggested. "Once we're all back together we can sit down and figure everything out. I promise, Ambrose, we're not going to let Tomas live much longer."

My precious gremlin princess sighed, running his fingers through his hair again. He leaned his forehead against mine, murmuring, "Thank you, little queen."

I placed a gentle and quick kiss against his mouth before pulling away. "The person with the higher body count gets to come first!" I dashed off with a laugh.

A growled chuckle followed close behind me as we ran head first into the battle. Relief flooded my veins when it became apparent that the fae were winning the battle, clearly outnumbering the vampires. Hopefully the others didn't encounter too many surprises during their own missions.

"Fifteen!" Ambrose shouted over the din battle, ripping a laugh from me. "Make sure to keep up, little queen!"

Slicing through the head of a vampire, I shouted, "That's twenty for me, princess!"

"Bull shit!"

"What the fuck are the two of you arguing over this time?" Caspian's question had me spinning in place. My fae prince was standing behind me, eyebrow cocked, arms folded, and covered in blood. "Hello, dick slayer."

"Doesn't seem like they're arguing to me." My entire body relaxed at the sound of Jacobi's voice. My angel king. Heat stung my eyes, and I was surprised by the flood of emotion at the sight of my two missing mates. I'd missed them. Gods, had I missed them.

"We're trying to see who can kill the most vampires," I explained, intently studying Caspian and Jacobi.

At first, I was looking for injuries. I needed to ensure they were safe and unharmed, and if the way they studied me was any indication, they were doing the same. It was only once I assured myself they were whole and the blood on them wasn't theirs that I allowed my gaze to linger on them for an entirely different reason.

Caspian, his black skin glistening with sweat, and his ice blue eyes that flared with heat, didn't move. He simply stood where I spotted him and continued his perusal of my body. When a vampire ran at him from behind, all he did was lift a hand and close his fist. The vampire immediately crumpled to the ground, its head crushed. I'd have to evaluate why I found that incredibly sexy later.

Jacobi, by contrast, was all golden skin and hair. Seemingly nothing out of place or dirty. His aura was so calm despite the fighting that continued to rage around us. He grinned at me and I felt my lips tug up in response.

"What do you get if you win?" Jacobi asked, his tone light and teasing.

"The winner gets to come first," Ambrose responded. Sometime during my ogling of my mates, he'd slid up behind me. "Thank you for distracting her for so long, I really want to win."

Jacobi and Caspian looked at one another, twin smirks appearing on their dazzlingly handsome faces. They stayed that way for a moment before sprinting off.

Bastards.

“No fair!” I yelled. I was only met with laughter from all three of my mates.



LATER, when the fighting was over and the city secured, the four of us made our way back to the city center, looking for my other mates along the way. I still felt as though this whole ordeal had been far too easy, but I was now too tired to care. *Take the win, Ashera. We can continue the fight for as long as we need so long as we continue to celebrate the wins.*

“Wait until you get a load of the new guy,” Ambrose said with a shake of his head. “Remember that asshole that’s been popping up?” Both Caspian and Jacobi nodded. “He’s a *god*.”

Both men scoffed.

“Bull shit,” Caspian responded. “Everyone knows the gods are myths.”

Ambrose smirked at me. “Do you want to tell him or should I?”

Caspian stopped in his tracks, gaze flying between me and my vampire. “Tell me what?” He demanded.

My gaze landed on Jacobi who seemed to be taking this all in stride. Then again, he was always my more level-headed mate.

“Apparently,” I began, “I’m a goddess.”

“There’s no apparently about it,” Daimon’s low timbre had all of us whirling to face him. Caspian and Jacobi moved to stand in front of me as though they were facing down a threat. “I won’t harm her.”

“I actually believe him, I think,” I said, ignoring the god in favor of my angel and fae. “Daimon has a bit of an attitude issue that I need to deal with, but I very much doubt he wants to harm me.”

“On the list of things I very much want to do with you, goddess, hurting you doesn’t make the cut,” Daimon assured, his voice dipping to a low silky purr. I didn’t bother to hide my eye roll.

“Stand down,” Malachi’s clipped order had the tension leaking out of my shoulders. “Daimon just saved Ashera.”

“Ripped Judah’s heart right out,” Ambrose commented brightly, a faint trace of awe in his voice. He was staring at Daimon as though he’d happily suck the god’s cock. Interesting.

I hadn’t realized until that moment, when all of my mates were back together, just how tightly my muscles had been wound. Now, with all of them surrounding me, my muscles relaxed and everything seemed once again right with the world. Well, almost everything...

“He wasn’t Judah,” Daimon insisted with a huff. “I told you after I killed him. It was his twin brother.”

“Yes, I heard you the first time,” I responded. “Would you care to elaborate on that now that we’ve got some time?”

Daimon rubbed his chest, his heated gaze traveling over my body once again before he shrugged his overly large shoulders. While he wasn’t quite as tall as Mal, he was broader than any of my other mates. His thighs alone made me believe that he could easily crush someone’s skull between his legs. Though I was sure, after smashing his fist through someone’s rib cage and ripping their heart out, he could also crush a skull with his bare hands. The thought was oddly appealing. *Who knew I got so turned on by violence?*

“I can think of a few other things I’d rather be doing, goddess,” Daimon purred as he sauntered closer to me. Caspian and Jacobi bristled, moving in closer, not happy that this dangerous male was encroaching on my personal space. I would have to explain to everyone that I felt the pull of the mate bond with Daimon. “Oh stop. I won’t hurt her. Ever.”

“And we can just take your word for it?” Caspian snapped with a low growl. “We don’t even fucking know you.”

“So I suggest you back off.” Jacobi’s command had my nipples tightening, a tingle shooting down my spine. I loved when he was so commanding. “Now.”

Daimon huffed, rolling his eyes. I could see the intent to ignore them flare in his eyes, his hand reaching out to touch me.

And then he was gone.

I blinked, confused as I looked around. Where the fuck did he go?

“What the fuck?” Ambrose asked, his tone shocked and disappointed. “Where the hell did he go?”

“Who fucking cares?” Caspian asked.

“Precious,” Winta interrupted. “You’re going to need more energy. Malachi too. We’re all going to need to recharge. Why don’t we get back to the palace? We can clean up, refresh, and decide where to go from here.”

“I’m sure he’ll pop up again, Sher,” Mal murmured. “He’s been doing that a lot lately. I wouldn’t put it past him to just show up again. We can ask him what’s going on then.”

I huffed and nodded my head. Fine. I’d let it go for now. *Only* because Winta was right. I really needed more energy. We made our way slowly through the streets strewn with a few random vampire bodies here and there, but mostly with our own people enjoying their win. Ambrose was right – it *shouldn’t* have been that easy to take the city. I wasn’t sure if we should really be complaining though, because much like our armies, I had half a mind to take the win as it was. I shook my head to rid myself of the intrusive thoughts that would get me nowhere.

Caspian sidled up next to me as we walked, brushing his fingertips against the back of my hand. I shivered. Post battle, even the slightest touch from one of my mates was enough to send me careening over the edge. “I missed you, dick slayer.”

My eyes widened briefly before I smirked. “You missed me, or fucking me senseless?”

In front of us, the cold castle loomed overhead. I knew Ambrose hated his home, and would much rather see it burn than spend another night inside it. But shelter was shelter, and for tonight, at least we were safe. I wanted to spend one night together with my mates before all hell broke loose again.

“Can’t it be both?” Caspian laughed, but I caught a note of need lacing through it.

I shook my head. “You tell me, Cas.” Ahead of me, Ambrose nodded to one of the lone guards outside the massive doors, and they opened it for us. We all piled inside before taking a pause inside the dark stone entryway. “First, we need to find–”

I was cut off by Caspian pushing me against the smooth wall, cool through my leathers. “First, you need to be my good little dick slayer and let me taste you again. I’ve missed you so damn much. Every part of you.” His hands were tugging at my pants, pulling them down over my hips, and then his mouth was covering mine in a bruising kiss. “Do you hear me?”

I moaned into his mouth, clawing at his shoulders. My mates' desires were flooding me through the bond, telling me just what they thought of Caspian's little show. I knew a lot of this was dominance over Daimon, since this happened every time a new mate appeared, but Daimon wasn't here. That didn't matter to Caspian. His hands were dragging down my skin, goosebumps following his touch. My leathers disappeared with each caress. Gods, I missed his hands. When all of this was over, I never wanted to be separated from my mates ever again.

His teeth were replacing his hands, scraping lightly as he found his way to my core. "You're so fucking sweet."

"Gods," I groaned as his tongue swiped over my pulsing clit. Then louder, as he swiped again, with a bit more pressure. "Gods, Cas!"

I pictured the way he had crushed the vampire's skull with just a small move of his hands, my pussy aching with the thought that such a cold, cruel man could kneel in front of me with such reverence. Caspian pushed my legs further apart with his hands, licking and sucking and tasting me with vigor. My legs began to shake, giving way slightly as his fingers began to slide inside me in time with his tongue's ministrations.

He pulled back slightly, not stopping the movement of his fingers. "You're going to come on my tongue, dick slayer. I want you to come all over my tongue and fingers, and then I want you to beg for more from your mates."

I nodded, gasping as he picked up speed. "Please, Cas, make me fucking come."

He smiled against my clit. "Whatever my pretty dick slayer wants."

I rocked my hips against his face, chasing the release that was so damn close. The air was thick with sexual energy, and I fed off it as Caspian drove me over the edge. I felt Mal feeding off the energy in the room too. I screamed as my orgasm hit me, the time apart making every cell in my body ten times as sensitive to Caspian's touch. I slumped against the wall, taking in the heated stares of my mates as I let my eyes drift shut, the fae between my legs still licking me through the aftershock.

But I wasn't done yet. "More," I whispered. "I need more."

I didn't need to have my eyes open to know Caspian was smirking. "That's my girl." I heard him address the others in the room. "What are you waiting for? You heard our queen."

“I’m all for making kitten come until she cries,” I heard Thorne say, “but I think we could all use a bed to collapse in after. It’s been a fucking day.” .

Warm hands scooped me up, and I knew Jacobi’s firm body and his warm, soothing scent anywhere. “I’ve got you, my love,” he murmured.

I snuggled against his chest, knowing this brief respite would soon be over. Though, if my mates had anything to say about it, I would soon be screaming in ecstasy once more. I took the moment to bask in Jacobi’s warmth as he followed Ambrose through the castle. He pressed a light kiss to my hair as his pure devotion to me flooded my senses.

“Just so everyone is aware,” Ambrose crowed, “I killed the most vampires so I get to come before Ashera.”

“Seriously?” I grumbled. “I don’t think that’s true.”

“I give my kills to Ambrose,” Jacobi rumbled.

I’m sorry...what?

Ambrose’s delighted laughter rang out around us. I turned my head to glare up at my angelic mate. He had a broad grin stretching across his handsome face. Irritation and love warred within me as he winked mischievously at me.

“I say we edge her.” Who the hell was this male? My pure angel king who had never touched another before me was now suggesting that my mates edge me? How the fuck did he even know what edging was?

My eyes narrowed. “Excuse me?”

Malachi chuckled. “You better get us where we’re going quick, you fanged fucker. Someone needs to stuff a cock in her mouth.”

I sucked in a deep breath and turned my head in his direction. There was a sinister yet heated look in my incubus’s eyes, causing desire to pulse through my veins, each beat of my heart sending it soaring higher as we maintained eye contact. I was still riding the high of battle, and I wanted nothing more than to touch, kiss, and love every one of my mates. I wanted to ensure that we were all very much alive.

“If you keep looking at me like that,” Mal growled, “I’m going to make sure that you don’t come until we’ve all had our fill. At least twice.”

I felt my eye twitch at the threat. “Is that so?” I asked in a low, dangerous tone, daring him to confirm his threat.

“That’s right, little slut.” My demon’s grin turned dark. “And I’ll make sure that I tell them the *exact* time to stop.”

Being an incubus, Malachi would know—down to the millisecond—when to stop before I tipped over the edge. This wouldn't be a normal round of edging. He was talking near torture. I felt my fangs scrape along my lip with the urge to bite down into him and drain him as much as I could. While the idea heated my blood to a whole new level, the thought of not being allowed to come while all of my mates came at least twice was... unacceptable.

"She both loves and hates that idea, Mal." Jacobi chuckled. His arms tightened around me.

My attention was drawn away from my angel and incubus by the creaking of a door. Ambrose had finally stopped. This room was different from the one we'd stayed in previously. It was far more elaborate.

"These are the king's quarters." Ambrose explained, a vicious grin creeping across his face. "Tomas wouldn't want these rooms soiled in any way. I can't think of a better way to tell that asshole to fuck off than having all of us come over every fucking inch of this place."

I could sense how much my mates agreed with Ambrose. If Tomas was ever able to make it back to Masas—to this room—he'd scent what had happened here. He'd know all of my mates had pleased me thoroughly on all of the surfaces. I hoped it gave that fucker hives.

Suddenly, Thorne was by my side, shifting me from Jacobi's arms and setting my feet on the floor. His hand immediately encircled my throat, and he nudged me so my back was against my angel king.

"Here's how this is going to work, kitten," Thorne's rough timbre held a hint of a purr. "I said that your fanged fucker would be licking my come out of your sweet pussy, and I meant it. So you're going to get on that table over there," —he pointed to my right, but I didn't break eye contact with the predator that held my neck— "Winta is going to ride your gorgeous face until she's screaming your name. And you'd better make her scream, kitten. While you're eating your queen out, I'm going to fuck you hard and fast. I'm going to pump you so full of come, it'll be dripping out of you."

The soft thud of flesh hitting flesh had my gaze darting to the side to see that Mal had Ambrose in a choke hold. "Jacobi and Caspian, which one of you wants to make sure that the fanged fucker here licks our little cum slut clean once Thorne is done with her?"

My memory flashed to another fight for dominance and my pussy clenched. I love when all of my mates shared in joint pleasure, but there

was just something about these walls of muscle fighting to determine who enjoyed what that was absolutely delicious. All I wanted was for everyone to feel loved and to bask in the pleasure we could all give to one another.

A finger laid gently on my cheek turned my attention back to Thorne. He had a wide grin on his face as he wagged his finger. “Uh-uh, kitten. It’ll have to be a surprise.”

He pulled me against him; his hand still clamped around my throat. His lips brushed against mine, causing my eyes to flutter as desire curled through my body. Slow and sweet, it began to heat my blood. The kiss served its purpose, to distract me from Jacobi and Caspian battling to dominate Ambrose.

It also served to distract me from Winta, who slid in behind me to cut my leathers off my body. The kiss of the blade against my skin heightening my lust-filled haze as Thorne continued to toy with my lips. Each touch was whisper soft, not nearly enough and yet still perfect.

Without realizing I’d been moving, my now naked body was leaned back so my spine was pressed against the table Thorne had gestured to earlier. Our lips parted as the hand around my neck pinned me in place. The smooth wood was cold against my heated skin, the contrasting sensations had my breath hitching. Thorne’s knee wedged between my own, opening my legs wide enough to allow his hips to rest against my own. It reminded me that I had limbs of my own.

I launched into action, or at least as much action as Thorne’s hand allowed. My nails dug into his forearms, enough that I caught the slight scent of blood in the air. My legs went to wrap around Thorne’s waist, but two sets of hands on either limb stopped me. My gaze flicked from Thorne to see that Malachi and Caspian each held one of my legs, pulling them apart ever so slightly so I lay spread bare before them.

“Can you smell how wet she is?” Thorne purred. The hand not currently holding me to the table freed his impressive, ribbed cock from his pants. “Kitten wants to be used.”

“Don’t worry, precious,” Winta soothed from next to me, and my gaze instantly turned to her. Her fingers played with my hair as she leaned down to whisper in my ear. “Now be a good cum slut for your mates.”

I shivered, a needy mewl leaving my lips without my permission. My hips bucked of their own accord. I felt so empty.

“Climb up on the table, Winta. Show your mate your wet pussy before you smother her with it.” Mal ordered. A dark chuckle rippled through my other mates as Winta, now naked, slowly climbed onto the table, situating herself on her knees on either side of my head.

“Now be a good girl and lick that pussy until Winta comes, kitten.” Thorne demanded.

I didn’t get any additional warning before Winta lowered herself on my face. I moaned at the scent of her, immediately sliding my tongue out to lick at her clit. One of my hands latched onto her hip, while the other wedged itself between Winta and my face so I could slide my fingers deep into her pussy. She clenched around my fingers with a moan, her hands coming down to grip the edge of the table above my head.

“Good girl, kitten. Keep it up,” Thorne murmured.

He didn’t need to tell me twice. I became lost in my dragon. Her scent. The silken feel of her skin. Her heat. Everything about her was made to make me crave her. Knowing that Visa had returned to me...I let loose a possessive snarl as I pushed Winta down harder on my face. I wasn’t ever letting go of her again.

“Ashera!” Winta cried. Her hips began to undulate against me. I worked with the movements of her body, alternating between sucking on her clit and licking it. I kept my fingers buried deep inside her, making sure to brush against her g-spot.

My attention faltered for a moment when I felt Thorne slam into me. We’d only had sex that once on the battlefield, but gods! The feel of his ridged cock as it slammed home combined with the taste of Winta on my tongue had my eyes rolling back. I felt Winta’s pussy flutter around my fingers, just as aroused by this as I was.

“You eat pussy the same way you take my cock, kitten,” Thorne rumbled. “I love watching your cunt take every fucking inch of me while you eat out Winta. Such. A. Good. Girl.” Those words were each punctuated with a vicious thrust.

I moaned against Winta’s clit. Each time Thorne thrust into me, Winta would push down against my face, causing my fingers to plunge deeper and my lips to create beautiful friction. Winta’s moans increased in volume, her cries echoing in the room around us. My own moans were smothered as I continued to lick and suck at her swollen flesh.

Thorne's thumb started to rub against my clit, causing me to buck against him. My pussy clamped down around his cock, which had those delicious ridges hitting every nerve ending inside me. My nails dug into Winta's hip, a desperate attempt on my part to ground myself through this storm.

"She's getting close," Mal said. I wanted to kick him.

"Uh-uh, kitten. You know the rules. You don't get to come yet." Thorne's thumb left my clit. A soft whimper flew from my lips at the loss. "Make Winta come, kitten. Now."

While I was tempted to ignore the command and play with Winta, I wanted to get her off. I wanted to feed on her release, soak in all that power. I wanted to feel her clench around my fingers and lap up everything she offered me. I wanted to hear her come unraveled, revel in the sounds she made for me.

Winta began chanting my name as Thorne's thrusts turned almost violent in their intensity. I felt my fangs descend, so I turned my head and sank them into Winta's thigh. She cried out as she came around my fingers, screaming my name to the heavens. Thorne joined her, his cock swelling as he flooded my pussy with his hot come. The swollen ridges of his cock had me thrashing against him, wanting desperately to find my own release.

Unfortunately, Thorne pulled out before I could attempt to topple over the edge. Malachi and Caspian still had a tight hold on my legs, and in a lightning-fast move, Winta shifted so her legs were now pinning my arms to the table. I trashed a bit, blood lust and the need for my mates mingling within me. The feeling was so intense it burned through my body. I needed to come, needed to feel all of them come with me.

"Fuck." Ambrose's coarse voice sounded close, indicating he'd taken Thorne's place between my legs, "the pheromones she's putting out..."

"Even if she isn't doing it intentionally," Mal replied, "her body is attempting to make sure that we fuck her into next week. It wants to be covered in our come. Needs to have that succulent cunt dripping for days after we're done with her."

I whimpered.

Ambrose's snarl had me straining to look past Winta's delicious body. Thorne's hands gripped my own, prompting Winta to climb off me so I could see what was about to happen. Malachi and Caspian still had a firm grip on my legs.

But it was Jacobi, his large arms bulging as they held Ambrose by the neck and torso that captured and held all of my attention. A deep inhale from my right, followed by a low chuckle told me that Caspian could smell how turned on I was by the sight.

“Look at that delicious pussy leaking Thorne’s come, you fanged fucker,” Jacobi whispered in Ambrose’s ear. “You’re going to lick it all up, get her nice and clean so the rest of us can use her as we want.”

Ambrose snarled, struggling to get out of my angel king’s grasp. Jacobi’s arms held firm, not allowing Ambrose to move so much as an inch in my direction. The hand that gripped the vampire’s waist moved to fist in his hair, ripping a grunt from Ambrose’s lips.

“Let me taste her,” the vampire demanded.

Jacobi allowed Ambrose to move closer before he kicked the vampire’s legs out, causing his knees to slam against the floor with a loud thud. Ambrose snarled again and lunged forward, but the hand in his hair stopped him mere inches from my pussy.

“You’re not to let her come, you hear me?” Jacobi growled. “Bring her to the edge. Lick her precious little cunt clean, but you don’t let her come.”

“Don’t worry, Jacobi.” Mal smiled. “I’ll let everyone know when she’s getting close so you can pull him away from her.”

Jacobi gave a stiff nod and released Ambrose’s hair. The vampire surged forward, his hot mouth latching onto my clit and sucking with a blinding intensity. I arched my hips, a gasp ripped from my lips. I was determined to maintain eye contact with my vampire. His blood red eyes smoldered up at me, a wicked gleam in them. He was up to something.

His tongue slid down to lap at the entrance of my pussy, a low hum leaving him before he started to feast. My moans echoed in the room around us, my chest heaving with each breath I took. The pleasure was almost too much.

Ambrose grunted, and his face buried further into my pussy. I snapped my eyes open, not even aware that I’d closed them, to find Jacobi had buried himself balls deep in Ambrose’s ass.

“Fuck me hard and fast, you feathered fuck,” Ambrose growled against my clit. “I want you to slam my face into my little queen’s delicious pussy.”

Since he didn’t need to hold my legs open, Ambrose’s hand lifted to slam two fingers deep into me, causing a long, low moan to pass through my lips. Jacobi slammed into him again, crushing his mouth against my clit

and causing my breath to hitch. I needed more. Gods, I needed so much more.

Jacobi started fucking Ambrose hard and fast, just as requested. The force of the angel king's thrusts slammed Ambrose's face against me, which, in turn, caused the suction to ebb and flow as Jacobi pistoned in and out. It was delicious.

"She's getting close," Malachi rumbled. *That dirty fucking traitor. I am so getting him back for all of this.*

Jacobi's hand fisted in Ambrose's hair again, ripping my vampire away from my throbbing pussy. A frustrated scream flew from my lips, and I started to thrash against the mates holding me down. If they wouldn't give me what I wanted, I would fucking take it.

"Easy, kitten," Thorne purred in my ear. His hands gently rubbed against my wrists in an attempt to soothe me. "We'll let you come... eventually."

I snarled up at him.

Without warning, I was being lifted. Malachi took my place on his back before I was rested on top of him. He held my hips to prevent me from slamming down onto his cock and taking what I needed. Thorne released my wrists, and moved to make way for Caspian while Ambrose—still being held by Jacobi, who was still buried balls deep in the vampire's ass—moved to stand between Mal's legs.

"Here's how this is going to work, dick slayer," Caspian growled down at me, heat lighting his eyes as his gaze slowly traveled over my sweat slicked body. "I'm going to fuck that pretty little mouth of yours, the incubus is going to own that tight pussy, and princess over there will ruin your ass. Any questions?"

They didn't give me time to respond. As one, they grabbed me and thrust into me. Caspian slid down my throat with a low moan. Malachi thrust up into my already well used pussy. Ambrose slid into my ass, having already lubed himself up. They set a brutal pace, and I loved every minute of it. My eyes rolled into the back of my head as they synced their thrusts. Winta and Thorne were offering verbal praise that washed over me without actually sinking in.

Jacobi's grunt had my eyes fluttering open. "She needs to come soon. I'm not going to last much longer."

Malachi released his pheromones, causing all of us to moan.

“Come on, little queen. Come. Now.”

That was all I needed. I detonated, taking my mates—including Thorne and Winta—with me.



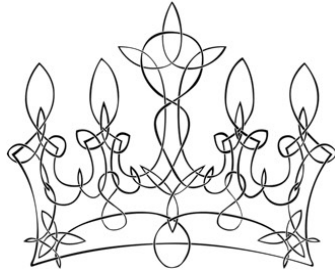
Daimon

MOTHERFUCKER! I roared as I reappeared in my hut by the Void. I’d been so fucking close. Rage bubbled in my core, burning my soul, twisting my mind until all I could see had turned black. I needed to fucking kill something. Someone. Anything. Maim. Torture. Destroy.

I’d been taken from my mate. *Again.*

I vowed, here and now, that I would find a way to ensure this stopped fucking happening. Nothing, not even the other gods, were going to keep me from my mate. I’d waited five thousand years. I was done waiting. I could feel Ashera take her pleasure with her other mates. Rage and desire pounded through me, turning me almost feral. I would never deny my mate the other pieces of her soul. I simply wanted to be included. I’d raze this world to the ground to make sure that I could once again be by her side. I planned to devour Keres and anyone who stood with her. I’d shower Ashera in their blood so she could absorb their power. Then I planned to burn it all to the ground, all while I fucked my glorious goddess senseless.

ASHERA



Laying in bed in the early hours of the morning with my mates, especially after we'd all been able to come together several times throughout the night, was bliss. I never wanted to leave this tangle of limbs, but there was something on my mind. Something our first round last night had brought to my attention.

"Guys?" I kept my voice soft, even though I could feel that everyone was awake. We were all just basking in the glow and drowsy. Several rumbles told me I had their attention. "I wanted to make sure we're all on the same page."

"About?" Jacobi asked. He leaned around Caspian to take a strand of my hair. I loved that they just wanted to touch me all the time. I completely understood it, because I needed to touch them, too. Being apart from just one of them was almost painful for me. But this? The togetherness we had right now? That was everything I needed and more in life.

"Winta and I haven't really talked about it ourselves yet." I looked over to her with a soft smile on my face. She was so beautiful in the early light, her skin flushed from our activities the night before. I wanted to lean over and kiss her, but it would have to wait. For now. There was a more important conversation to be had. "But we should probably talk about group dynamics, and the likes."

"I think she's trying to see if I'm okay with any of you touching me sexually," Winta said, laughter dancing in her eyes. "Right?"

I huffed out a breath before nodding. "Yes. So long as we keep things between ourselves, I honestly don't mind if you all want to engage with

each other.”

“Unless it’s a dire emergency,” Malachi began, “I’d rather keep touching any of the others to when it’s not just me and you. Though, if I need to for energy, I will.”

The others murmured their agreement.

“I agree,” Winta said. “I don’t mind if any of the guys touch me, but I would much rather it happen when you’re there. I know how much you enjoy watching your mates take pleasure any way that they can. It enhances the pleasure for us.”

“I think it’s safe to say that we all just want to be included during group times, but we also want alone time with you,” Jacobi murmured. The others agreed.

“Okay. That settles it.” I smiled at my mates. “I just don’t want any of you to be left wanting something, or needing something.”

“Dick slayer,” Caspian scolded. “You’re a damn succubus. Your sexual appetite is insane. We’re not left wanting. If anything, I think we’re worried that you’re left wanting.”

I laughed. “You guys satisfy me plenty.”

“Damn straight we do,” Ambrose huffed.

“Now let me get back to sleep,” Caspian grumbled.

Fair enough. I could feel that everyone else was just as drowsy, so I prepared to snuggle into the warmth of the bodies around me and drifted off again. I only got so far, before a soft hand was pulling me out of bed, a warm voice whispering into my ear, “Come with me, my love.”

Jacobi. “I thought we were going back to sleep,” I protested. I didn’t complain too much though, because I could already feel his need flooding through our bond. He wanted me, craved my body, and was pulling me away from the others so he could get the *alone time* he had previously mentioned. My good little angel was a dirty devil in disguise. He pulled me down the hall, weaving our way through the palace as we wandered naked and barefoot on cool marble. I wasn’t sure where he was taking me, but I couldn’t be certain he knew where he was going either. I wasn’t sure it mattered.

“I couldn’t sleep. I just kept thinking about you last night, how you looked while I fucked Ambrose. I didn’t get to feel your sweet pussy, and I need to, my love.” He stopped at the end of the hall, a balcony overlooking the barren gardens of Masas. It felt like nothing was alive in Masas – not

the people, not the buildings, not even the landscape. Everything was cold, and for a moment I felt pride that my vampire had made such a turn to become the man he was today. Despite anything else, Ambrose was *alive*. I had seen as much last night when his face was between my legs, and his eyes were absolutely feral as Jacobi fucked him.

My angel grinned at me. His handsome, warm smile was a complete contrast to the churning craving that I felt bubbling beneath the surface of his skin. He picked me up, setting me on the railing of the balcony, and spread my legs before him.

“It’s going to be daylight soon, Jacobi,” I murmured. Dawn was already breaking over the horizon, and I could see a servant or two wandering in the gardens below.

He grinned as he knelt between my legs. “Don’t you think I know that? I want them to hear you scream my name. I want them to see you come for me – their queen, being feasted upon by the king of angels.”

I had never been one to shy away from public acts, but Jacobi was raised differently. It seemed that with each new mate, Jacobi found more and more of his true self. And this? The wanting to be seen, to be watched...I could certainly enjoy this side of him. His breath was warm on my pussy as he blew against my aching core, his wings folded close to his back. “You smell divine,” he rumbled.

I moaned and tossed my hair back out of my face. My clit was already aching, pulsing with excitement, driven by the sexual energy racing in the air all around us. “Jacobi,” I murmured. “Make me come.”

He pressed his head against me, licking my pussy in one smooth swipe of his tongue. His fingertips pressed into my inner thighs, a bruising pressure I loved and needed more of – especially from my angel king. “I want you to be a good girl for me, and scream my name so everyone in Masas knows who is making you come.”

Fuck. Me. Jacobi’s dirty tongue was at such odds with his sweet demeanor, and I loved every bit of it. I arched into his tongue, my legs tensing to keep me on the balcony as I thrust my clit into Jacobi’s mouth. He sucked at the sensitive flesh, soothing the ache growing between my legs, but making me crave, “More.”

His fingers slipped from my thighs, stroking my wet entrance as his tongue swirled around and around. I moaned, louder this time, rocking my hips against him. His mouth released with a quiet pop, and he grinned up at

me – nearly feral in his expression. “Just like that, my love. Just a bit louder.”

Through the bond, I could feel my mates stirring, waking up with the energy flooding between Jacobi’s teasing fingers and myself. I could sense them beginning to reach between their legs, to touch themselves, overwhelmed by my desire to come. Wanting to be part of this experience while also respecting Jacobi’s desire to be alone with me.

“Come for me, Ashera. Show this city what it looks like to be alive.” He settled his mouth back on my clit at the same time his finger pressed inside me.

His finger curled, reaching a spot within me that had my vision flashing, and my back arching. His tongue swirled, teasing, and my body reached higher and higher toward that moment of ecstasy.

“Oh my gods, Jacobi,” I screamed, not caring who was around to hear me or see me. All I cared about was my mate as he knelt before me, lapping at me like I was the sweetest dessert. I shattered on his tongue, screaming his name for all of Masas to hear.

Jacobi sucked and fingered me through my release, and eventually brought me off the ledge, cradling me in his arms. He murmured sweet words into my ear, telling me how much he loved me as I floated on a cloud of bliss. The only thought in my head was that maybe he was right – maybe we could show Masas what it was like to be alive.



Ambrose

TO SAY I was disappointed by Daimon’s disappearance was a mild understatement. The male ate a heart. Not just any heart, the heart of the man that had attempted to assassinate my mate. While I was jealous I hadn’t thought to do that, I felt a sense of kinship with the god. That had been one hell of a power move. *Is it wrong that I hope he’s one of Ashera’s mates?*

While I certainly didn’t want to continue to divide Ashera’s attention with more mates, I wouldn’t begrudge my little queen anything. Especially not a god that would murder without hesitation and then eat the hearts of his victims. *Gods, he was so fucking cool.*

I hated this palace, with my whole heart. It was filled with so many awful memories. Frankly, the whole building could burn to the ground for all I cared, but it was somewhere to rest our heads – regroup, recharge, and begin plotting our next move. Once this was all over, I'd have Ashera design a new palace. Something where her touch was obvious in every single room.

Everyone was currently gathered around the long table in the dining hall, shoveling food as fast as they could. We'd agreed last night that we would set out for Sahira this morning. Our first priority would be finding the real Judah. Daimon hadn't given us the fake witch king's name. While Winta, while recalling that there had been a twin brother, couldn't remember his name as they had only met once or twice. Ashera made it clear, Tomas was not to get his hands on the real witch king, and if he was already Tomas's prisoner, we were to free him.

My father had already sunk his claws into the imposter, we couldn't allow him to do more harm with the real one. Granted, we were assuming the real Judah was still alive. Daimon hadn't given us any indication that he wasn't, but we should really be prepared for that possibility. The last thing we needed to worry about was another kingdom's succession. Though, the fact that not-Judah was walking around as his brother implied real-Judah was still alive...somewhere.

"Hey, princess," Ashera's musical voice pulled my attention to her. "You doing okay?"

"I'm fine, little queen. Just picturing taking a sledgehammer to this place when we're done with it. How do you feel about a new palace higher up in the mountains?" I toyed with the eggs on my plate, pouting that I had to find and kill my father before any of this could happen. Tomas ruined fucking everything.

She laughed, and I warmed to the wonderful sound. Only Ashera ever made me feel this way, and only she ever would. I didn't want to see another woman in my sights if I could help it, because they would pale to her effortless beauty. No offense to Winta, of course, but I only had eyes for my little queen. "Aren't you getting a little ahead of yourself there?"

I shook my head. "Absolutely not. I figured when this was all over, we would spend time in each of the kingdoms, right? So we need a place that we actually enjoy staying at for extended periods of time. Not fucking fancy graveyards." I glared down at the silver plate smeared with the remains of

my breakfast. I hated this plate. It suddenly seemed like this plate was the source of all of my problems. It represented my father's horrid taste. The fact that it still existed meant that he still existed. The damn this was fucking taunting me. I picked up the heavy dish and chucked it over my head toward the black wall. A servant entering the room startled and dropped her tray. Ashera glared at me, getting up to help the slight woman. If I could, I would have blushed. "I'm sorry," I called.

Across the table from me, Caspian rolled his eyes. "You're just lucky Mal isn't here to witness your little temper tantrum. You would've never heard the end of it."

"Yeah, yeah." I slumped in my chair, feeling guilty until slim arms wrapped around my shoulders. My mate, kind, caring, and empathetic even when I wasn't. Even when I didn't deserve such attention.

"We can tear this whole godsdamn place down, and then build a beautiful new palace far away from the city," she murmured in my ear, dragging her finger down my neck in a way that made me shiver. "After we find and kill Tomas."

I rolled my eyes, gripping her arm with one hand and stabbing my fork into the dark wooden table with the other. I wanted his blood, and I wanted it *now*.

Ashera kissed my cheek. "That is a good point though. Has anyone seen Mal this morning?"

"I haven't seen him since last night," Thorne offered through a mouthful of food like some kind of savage. Didn't the shifters learn *any* table etiquette? I allowed my disgust to show on my face as I watched him.

I darted my eyes along the table, then. Thorne sat next to Winta. Caspian was across from me, and Jacobi was to my left. No Mal. "Are you sure he isn't still in bed, little queen? You did wear him out last night."

"I'm sure," she said. "The room was empty when I came down here. It's not like Mal to miss a meal." I could feel her tension through the mate bond, her anxiety surging to the surface. Putting down my fork, I pulled her onto my lap.

I pulled her face into my hands, forcing her to focus on me. "He's got to be around here somewhere," I reasoned. "He's probably just wandered off somewhere and lost track of time giving people orders. We're all done eating now, so we can split up and look for him."

At the end of the table, Thorne grumbled.

Whatever. He could eat later. Fucking savage. Ashera jumped off my lap, and I stood to grab her hand. “We’ll take the East Wing. Jacobi and Caspian can handle the West Wing, and Thorne and Winta can search the perimeter.” At the door to the hallway I paused, Ashera already trying to pull me out to look for Mal. “You know, at some point, we should look for Daimon, too. Why the hell did he just fuck off like that? Does anyone know where he went?”

My statement was met with a series of grumbles behind me. “That asshole can stay missing as far as I’m concerned. I don’t need to be competing with a god,” Thorne muttered.

Ahead of me, Ashera rolled her eyes. “Like it or not, Daimon has been helping us. He probably knows where Judah is hidden, so we will be finding him. *After* we find Mal.”

The grumbling immediately stopped. We all knew better than to fight with our queen, especially when it came to Malachi. As much as I was loath to admit it, he was the leader of our merry little band, and had known Ashera the longest. He was her rock, and as such was also our rock. I didn’t want to admit that I was unnerved by his absence.



Thorne

GODS, I was hungry. I knew it was important to find Mal, but couldn’t it have waited until after everyone was done with breakfast? Shifters required an immense amount of food to keep our bodies strong. Didn’t anyone understand that? I stomped, glaring at anyone who came too close to us as Winta and I explored the gardens. Not that there was much of a garden to look at. It was entirely different from the landscape I called home. Qamar was warm and humid with lush jungles. Masas was cold. Cold temperature, cold people, cold buildings...I wasn’t sure how anyone could build a home here.

I missed my home. I missed the fruit trees outside my door, and knowing I could finish my breakfast without being interrupted. But this was the life I had accepted when I mated Ashera – gods knew I had more than enough time to decide otherwise. I had made my decision knowingly, and it

was more than worth it to know that beautiful kitten was my mate. Even if it came with the loss of food.

“What do you think about Daimon?” Winta asked. Her voice was casual, but I knew that if she was bringing it up, something was bothering her about it. We had been friends long enough for me to know the minute differences in the tones of her voice. She ducked under an evergreen archway – gods, even their greenery was fucking *cold* – and I followed close behind.

“What about him?”

She shrugged, lifting a strong, bare shoulder. I didn’t know how she was functioning in the cold like she was. I wanted to wrap myself and Ashera up in a blanket in front of a fire, and maybe engage in some vigorous activity to keep ourselves warm. “Don’t you find something about him, I don’t know, off?”

I scoffed. “Winta, the man has been on his own for how many years? I think I’d be a little squirrely too, especially if I disappeared every goddamn time I tried to have sex.”

Winta laughed, shaking her dark braids from side to side. “You know what I mean. Can we trust him? Ashera has a lot of enemies, and she can be overly trusting sometimes. I would never forgive myself if I let her go trekking after some deranged maniac, only for her to wind up hurt – or worse.”

“We aren’t going to let anything happen to her. I promise.” I meant my words with every fiber of my soul, and when Winta raised her warm, brown eyes to me, I knew she understood.

“I know.” She sighed. We had made our way around the entire exterior of the castle, and with the exception of one or two vampire guards, had come across no one. Mal was definitely not outside. “We should go find the others inside. He’s not here unless he’s hiding in a fucking bush.”

Inside the dining hall were Caspian and Jacobi. The angel king looked up hopefully at us, but his face fell when I shook my head. “Shit. Ashera is going to be pissed,” he said.

At that moment, Ashera and Ambrose strode into the dining hall. “Ashera is going to be pissed about what?” she asked. She didn’t need a response, because she looked around at all of us, taking note of who was here and, more importantly, who wasn’t. “Mal is missing. I knew it was too fucking easy. They must have been planning this the entire time.”

I pursed my lips. “We’ll get him back, kitten. I promise.”

She raised her pretty eyes to me, her stare hardening into something more dangerous. “Oh, I know we will. Whoever took my mate from me is going to be fucking sorry.”

I wasn’t sure I had ever seen anything more beautiful than Ashera ready to defend her mate. I hoped whoever had Mal was ready.



Malachi

I WAS SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS. I was certain my eyes were open, but all I could see around me was black. It was so thick I could practically taste it, struggling to breathe through its density. Where the fuck was I? The last thing I remembered was leaving the bedroom filled with sleeping bodies to find some water. And then...darkness.

I groaned, trying to push myself to sit up, but every bone in my body felt like it was bruised and sore to the touch. Fuck’s sake. I wasn’t sure where I was, but I knew it was way too fucking dark for my liking. I could usually see through anything, but this was insane. It was enough to drive anyone crazy.

I wasn’t sure I was getting enough air to my lungs. This was it. I was going to die, away from my mate. She would never find my body, because who the hell could find anything in this pitch black?

“Take a deep breath in while you count to five. It helps.” A deep voice cut through the darkness, gentle and reassuring. “Hold it in for five, and then release it for five. Focus on your breathing. You can’t see anything to focus on, so you’ll have to focus on that.”

I had no idea who was talking to me – friend or foe – but I had no other choice than to listen to what they were saying. At this point it was either take the unsolicited advice, or pass out into the sheer darkness. I struggled to believe how much this was impacting me. I hadn’t realized how strongly I relied on my vision.

I took a deep breath in, letting the damp, musty air fill my lungs. It was barely enough to keep me going, but it was there. *One... Two... Three... Four... Five...*

Then I remembered who I was. I was an assassin, not a fucking yogi. I sputtered it all out, the count forgotten. "Where the fuck am I?"

The body-less voice laughed. "Hell."

"Fuck's sake," I roared, falling to the ground. It was too dark for me to do anything without being on my hands and knees. I immediately started feeling around, looking for the edges of wherever I was held. "One fucking day without this bullshit. That's all I'm asking for. *One* fucking day."

The room seemed endless, or maybe that was just because it was pitch black. I had no idea if the man speaking to me was in the room with me, or just nearby. There was no way to tell anything.

"It's impossible to escape," he muttered now. "Believe me, I've tried everything. Absolutely everything. I have no idea how long I've been down here for. Time means nothing to me."

Yeah, okay, buddy, I thought. That was him. This was me. I was determined to get home to my mate. "Do they feed you?" I asked. "Or just leave you down here to wither away?"

If he was human, they would've had to feed him. If he was a different species, they would've gotten away with a lot longer between feedings. Whoever *they* were.

"That's the only time I see the light, when they open the door to toss some scraps my way. Enough to keep me alive. Guess now it'll be enough to keep us alive. Or they'll make us fight for it." *Not human then.*

Something else occurred to me at the same time. I paused for a moment, realizing mystery man might have some useful information for me after all besides our eating schedule. "So you've seen the room then?"

"Aye. I have." He sighed. It echoed in the darkness, a lonesome sound. "There's two cages down here. I'm in one. You're in the other. I saw them drag you in last night. Big fucker, aren't you?"

I groaned, sinking back onto my heels. "Yeah. And..." *Get to the point, asshole. Tell me something I can use, like there's three guards at the top of the stairs, or you're too weak to pull the bars apart.*

"Sorry. You're just the first person I've seen besides those asshole guards in a *really* long time. Anyway, there's two cells. The door to the stairs is right across from us. Obviously, it's locked..." He trailed off.

Obviously, this guy wasn't used to holding a conversation. I could only imagine I would be the same way after a week in here, let alone undetermined amount of time he thought he had been down here. Fuck, I

needed to get out of here. I needed to get back to Ashera. Try as I might, I couldn't reach her through the bond. Thinking about it, I couldn't feel any of them through the bond. "Is the room spelled?"

Another sigh. "Something is. The bars maybe, I can't do shit to them. Or maybe you're right, and it is the room. Something in here is repelling magic though – magic, strength, you name it."

God, this guy was just rainbows and fucking butterflies, wasn't he? "How big are the cells? If I crawl, how long will it take me to reach the bars?"

"Probably ten by ten. Give or take. But don't bother, I've tried."

Yeah. He mentioned, but was he a fucking incubus with a mate to get back to and a war to win? I didn't think so. I leaned back onto the palms of my hand, trying to ignore the screaming pain radiating up through my arm. I just needed to pick a direction and stick with it. The first round of shuffling brought me horns on into a cement wall. "Shit, that hurt," I muttered. I couldn't be sure, but I thought I could hear my cellmate laughing at me. "Shut up, man. Tell me something useful. Like who the hell is holding us down here." I turned around, and started the slow shuffling again. My hand trailed through something warm and wet and I tried not to think too hard about what it could be. *Get back to Sher. That's all that matters right now.* I tried again to reach out through the mate bond, but all I got back was a headache.

"Sorry, it's just like I said – it's fucking useless. I've tried it all. As for who is running this place? I heard the guards mention the name Chandra a few times. She seems to be in charge because they're all scared shitless of her. As for the why...I couldn't tell you."

"I've never heard of this Chandra in my life, but I've made a few enemies. Doesn't surprise me that I was kidnapped. The timing fucking sucks." My hand shuffled into something cool and metallic to the touch. *The bars.* I got as close as I could, relaxing my shoulders down to get into the mindset of absolutely destroying these things keeping me from my mission – from Sher.

"What's your name?" he asked, his voice suddenly bright for the first time since we had started talking. Probably thought we were going to be friends or some bullshit like that, but I had no plans on making friends in a fucking prison.

“Mal. Malachi of Shaytan.” I gripped the bars in both hands, feeling the weight of the metal between my palms. It felt like a standard iron. I could bend this in my sleep. These fuckers should’ve done a better job of making sure their prison was assassin proof before they took me. Too bad none of them would be left alive to learn from their mistake.

I wrenched, perspiration breaking out on my forehead, yanking as hard as I could on the malleable metal. Except nothing gave. *Fuck*. I stopped pulling for a moment, taking a breather. From across the room, my new friend mumbled something I couldn’t make out. “Gimme a second,” I grunted. “I’m busy.”

I settled my hands back into position again, and pulled as hard as I could. The disembodied voice was right, the bars wouldn’t give a single inch. I slumped down, wiping the sweat off my brow. Fucking hell they had done something to those bars all right. But it was fine. There would be another weak point somewhere in the cell, something I could manipulate. No prison was completely secure. I’d get out of here.

I finally tuned in to my cellmate talking again. “What did you say?” I asked.

He laughed – openly this time. “Told you it was useless. And I asked if you wanted to know my name.”

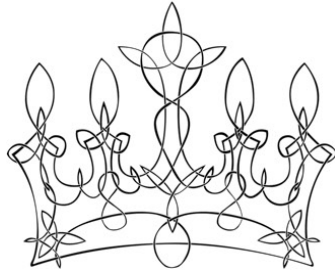
I rolled my eyes. I had nothing better to do while I plotted my escape. “Sure, kid. What’s your name?”

“Judah. King Judah of Sahira. At least I was king before I got trapped in here, who knows what the world is like now...”

He kept talking, the words bleeding into nothingness as I slumped to the ground on my back, a laugh bursting out of me before I could stop it. I wasn’t sure how such a terrible situation could’ve gotten any better, but here we were. The person we were looking for had fallen into my lap. Now, I just had to figure out a way to get us both out of here.

Fucking King Judah.

ASHERA



My heart hammered in my chest as panic skittered throughout my body making me jittery as hell. Malachi. My mind ran circles around his name, trying desperately to think of where he could be. Who the fuck could have taken him from us? How had they done it? When I got my hands on them...

“My love,” Jacobi’s soothing bass cut off my murderous thoughts. “I need you to take a deep breath for me.”

I scowled at him. It wasn’t the time for deep breaths. “Malachi is missing,” I snapped.

“We’re aware, dick slayer,” Caspian responded as he came to drape his arms around my shoulders from behind. He pressed a light kiss against the top of my head. “We’re going to find him. I promise, Ashera.”

I scoffed. “Like you give a fuck.” I pulled away from him. My anger and panic surged higher as I started to pace in front of Masas’s castle. Didn’t they understand? Malachi couldn’t be missing. He couldn’t.

I won’t survive if he’s taken from me, I thought. I wouldn’t be able to survive if any of my mates were taken from me. But Malachi... I shut my eyes in an attempt to hide the tears that threatened to fall. He’d been with me for so long, always just beyond my reach. I’d only been able to have him for such a short time. My heart ached. Everything ached.

Strong hands gripped my biceps and squeezed. It wasn’t painful, but it was enough to bring my attention to the person now standing in front of me. Winta. A tear trickled out of the corner of my eye. I’d lost Visa and she was here again, reborn as the stunning dragon shifter in front of me. I had to

believe that if the worst happened, not only would I feel it, but that he would come back to me. If I could hold Winta's soul through our bond, I could do the same with the others.

A shuddering breath forced its way out of my lungs as I blinked rapidly in an attempt to not let any further tears fall. I couldn't go through losing another mate. Losing Visa had nearly killed me. I'd been so empty, so lost.

"Precious," Winta murmured, drawing me against her in a tight hug. "We are going to get him back. You won't lose him."

"I can't," my voice broke. "I can't lose another mate, Winta."

"Like fuck will we let you, little queen," Ambrose snarled. "We'll burn the entire fucking world to the ground to find Mal for you."

Suddenly, I was in a mass of limbs and warmth flooded through our bonds. Love flowed through my empathic abilities, and the ache in my heart eased a bit. I took one big, shuddering breath and allowed my muscles to relax. They were right. We'd find Mal. We wouldn't stop until he was back with us, and the gods help the person who took him. I was going to rip them to shreds. I'd feed off of them in every possible way while I disemboweled them. I'd bathe in their blood. Wear their skull as a crown. But only after I'd tortured them to the point where they no longer understood the meaning of pain. They wouldn't beg me to end their life. No. I'd torture them until they begged me for more pain, until they couldn't breathe without feeling the sweet fire I'd give to them.

"That's my vicious little kitten," Thorne praised, a purr starting in his chest. "Now, let's figure out our game plan."

"We can't just leave Masas this way." Ambrose was right. We couldn't leave after we'd just destroyed the capital. We needed to leave troops behind.

"I had sent word to get what little troops Malak has here," Jacobi said as he pulled away, the others following suit. "They should be here today. We can leave them here to help clean up and secure the capital along with the vampires loyal to Ambrose. I don't think a large army is necessary here anymore."

"We'll take my troops and the shifters on to Sahira." Caspian looked to me for approval, and I nodded. "We should rally the demons too. We have no idea what the fuck Sahira is going to look like."

I ran my hands through my hair as I thought. With Judah's twin dead, we very much had no idea what the internal state of affairs looked like in

the witch kingdom. We had to assume it would be exceptionally hostile, afterall, their true king was either dead or hidden away somewhere. Not-Judah wasn't the most pleasant person. Those closest to him were probably in on whatever scheme he'd had.

"I'll send word to Shaytan to have our army head to Sahira. Why don't you and Ambrose stay here until the troops arrive, Jacobi?" I looked at my two mates. I didn't want to be separated from them, but I also wasn't willing to wait longer to start looking for Mal. They nodded. "Leave someone you can both trust behind and meet us when everything is settled."

They took off, and I turned to look at my other mates.

"I'm going to get our troops ready, come on Thorne." Winta nudged the large shifter, and they headed off.

"I'm going to go speak to my general in a minute, dick slayer." Caspian clasped my hands and leaned in to press his forehead to mine. "I'm going to have them go with you, but I'm going to go off on my own to look for Mal."

My heart lurched. "No. Caspian—" The idea of us being scattered every which way terrified me more than I liked. We were stronger together — always had been.

"Ashera." His firm tone cut me off. "Don't fight me on this. I think I can use my powers and my connection with the earth to find him. It's not an easy thing to do. I've only done it once. I'm willing to try it again, but I can't be around a lot of people, it makes things too confusing."

I tilted my head as I studied my fae mate. Use his connection with the earth to find Malachi? How? I didn't understand. But if there was a chance...

I bit my lip before nodding. "Okay. But you need to poke the bond so I know that you're okay. I can't feel Mal through the bond. And make sure that you take a small contingent with you. You aren't to be alone."



Caspian

I WASN'T ABOUT to tell my mate that searching for Malachi the way I planned was dangerous. She wouldn't let me if she knew the stakes.

Regardless of the dangers to my person, I was determined to see this through. My mate needed Mal. Fuck—and I hated to admit this even to myself—all of us needed that bat fucker. I'd never admit this out loud, but he held us together. I might seem like I hated everyone, and I did except for those of us in the mate bond with Ashera. I tolerated her other mates, but I loved the shit out of my strong and beautiful queen.

So I wouldn't tell her that I could overexert myself and end up in a heap of trouble. No. What I'd do was make sure that my gorgeous dick slayer knew how much I loved her, fuck her to within an inch of her life, and then head out to find the missing piece of our group. I wasn't planning on returning back to her empty handed.

"I'll take some men with me," I conceded to appease her. "But before I go..." I tangled my hands in her gold locks, drawing her body flush against mine. "We haven't had nearly enough time together again. So I need to make sure you remember that you also belong to me, dick slayer."

"Mmm..." she murmured. "Do I? Or do you belong to me?" She smirked at me, and I wanted to bite her full lips, no less an animal than either of the fanged douches.

I dragged my fingertip down her smooth skin, enjoying the way her cheeks flushed beneath my touch. "Don't joke with me. You'll lose." My other hand slipped beneath the vibrant maroon dress she wore, and while I missed the golds and ivories she often donned, this look suited her. Queen of the Vampires. Or, if Daimon was to be believed, a goddess of blood and war. My hand skirted higher, the fullness of her hip warm to my touch. My dick slayer was everything to me.

Absolutely everything.

She sucked in a breath through her teeth, and her smirk turned into a full grin. "If this is what losing feels like, Cas, I'll lose to you any day."

I snarled, and dropped my mouth to her neck, dragging my teeth down her throat as my fingers found her dripping entrance, telling me exactly how much she enjoyed losing. "You're mine, dick slayer. For however long the gods give us, you're fucking mine." I plunged one finger into her slick heat, and at the same time called to the air around us, letting the wind tangle and play in Ashera's lush locks.

I couldn't use too much of my elemental magic, not with what I knew I would need to attempt to find Mal, but I could use a bit to tease my mate, and to make her remember why I was superior to Ambrose, or – shudder–

Thorne. In case things went sideways, she would need to always remember that.

Things wouldn't go sideways. I stood back reaching my arms out to the wind and allowing it to tear my clothes from my body. With a smile, I allowed it to do the same to Ashera, and she giggled. "You're playful today."

I stepped forward, tracing her chin. "I hate seeing you sad, dick slayer. It...it breaks me. So if I need to step outside of my comfort zone to make you smile, I will. If I need to set off on my own to bring Mal back to you, I will. I'll do whatever it takes."

Ashera smiled, pressing a light kiss to my lips. "I know, Cas. I know you will."

I growled, picking her up into my arms. "Enough with the niceties. I believe I promised to make sure you knew you belonged to me."

Against my skin, I could feel Ashera growing even wetter, and she tangled her hands in my hair. I carried her to one of the massive dining chairs, sitting down with her straddling my lap. She inched forward, mewling in need.

"Do you want something?" I asked, dragging my fingertips across her thighs. I stopped each time before I reached her pussy, barely brushing over her clit. She moaned and wiggled closer. Between us, my cock was erect, and as much as I needed to be inside her, I needed this more. To make her ache for me. To make her beg for me. I needed to make sure it was my fucking dick she craved.

"Please. Please," she begged. She groaned and rocked on my lap. "I need you inside me."

In one swift motion, I lifted her up and impaled her on my waiting cock. Ashera screamed as her perfect pussy stretched around me, and the air between us was charged with both of our magic. *Fuck*. I had forgotten how amazing it was just the two of us, when our magic danced together.

I gave her a moment. Two. Then picked her up by her waist and began sliding her up and down on my cock. She gripped my wrists, moving in time with my thrusts. I wasn't going to last long, not with my perfect mate gripping me like she was. I was ready to explode, to fill her with my release, and to watch it drip down her legs.

"Tell me you're mine," I demanded, gripping my mate's luscious curves hard enough to mark her, to make her remember me. "Tell me *now*,

Ashera.”

“Oh, fuck, Cas, I’m yours! I’m fucking yours!” she cried, tipping her head back as she rode my cock.

“That’s right,” I cooed. “My good little dick slayer. My dirty queen, taking all of me. I know how much you love to be fucked. I know how much you love to be filled. But right now it’s just you and me, is that enough for you?”

“Yes!” Ashera gripped my shoulders, nails digging into my skin as she released wild energy into the air. She squeezed tighter, the feeling echoed by the pulsing between her legs as she rode me through her orgasm.

I held her tightly as I fucked her through each wave of pleasure, until my own release snuck up on me and I spilled inside with a cry of her name.

Holy fuck. Was I really about to risk this?

Ashera’s love and contentment rushed through me all at once, filling me with more satisfaction than my elemental magic ever had. My queen, my dick slayer, was the most incredible kind of magic I had ever known.

Goodbyes weren’t my strong suit, and my heart already ached at the idea of this being our last time together. No. I wouldn’t let it be. I got dressed, and then gathered Ashera into my arms. I tipped her face toward me, her brilliant eyes more powerful than any sun, and kissed her deeply.

I love you, I said with my kiss. *I love you, and I’m sorry.* There was a good chance Ashera would find out exactly how dangerous my mission was while I was gone. I hoped this would make up for it. I pulled away, offering her one last smile, one last kiss, and one last look.

“Be safe,” she whispered. “Be safe, and come back to me.”

“I always will.” With that, I turned and walked out of the door, leaving my mate to face her next battle without me.



Malachi

KING FUCKING JUDAH. That thought kept spinning around and around my mind. I’d just watched his brother get his heart ripped out and eaten yesterday, and now I was in a cell with him. What the actual fuck was my life right now? Did I tell him that we killed his brother? And who the fuck

was Chandra, and why was she holding the fucking king of Sahira in a cell? Gods, how long had this guy been down here?

I cleared my throat, struggling to figure out what I wanted to ask first. The loss of my vision must have impacted me more than I realized because the first thing out of my mouth was, “I watched your brother’s heart get eaten by a crazed, psychopathic god.”

What the fuck is wrong with me right now?

“Really?” The excitement in Judah’s voice wasn’t hard to miss.

“Yeah,” I mumbled. My mind was still racing with the implications of my situation so I missed what the witch king said next.

“Malachi!” The firm outburst of my name—while not a shout—in the almost deafening silence had my head snapping back. My eyes narrowed, even though he couldn’t see me glaring at him, it made me feel better. “How the fuck were you able to watch my brother die?”

I huffed out a breath. “It’s a bit of a long story, actually.”

“Well, we have plenty of time.” I didn’t appreciate the sarcasm in his voice. When we got out of here I planned to punch him in the face.

I told him about meeting not-Judah in Qamar and the events that led to his death, remaining as vague as I could. I wasn’t sure I could trust him yet. Judah sat quietly throughout my tale, not once interrupting to ask questions. It was actually refreshing not having someone try to talk over me, especially after having to deal with the fucking princess and the asshole fae—pointy eared fuck-face.

“I had suspected that he took my place, though to be honest I doubt he was smart enough to come up with the plan himself.” Considering the fucker had tried to kill Ashera, I would agree that not-Judah wasn’t that bright. “He was...”

Judah’s voice drifted off. I had no idea how long he’d been locked up down here, but it was clear it had been long enough for him to lose his train of thought quickly, drop off mid-thought and sentence, and lose his people skills. Not that I really had people skills. My job had been to kill people, not get to know them.

“How long have you been down here?” I asked, knowing that he wasn’t sure but still amazed that I’d found him. He mumbled something, and even straining to hear him I couldn’t make it out. “Judah! Gods, do you even remotely have any people skills left?”

“Wha-?”

I snapped my fingers in the direction his voice came from. I didn't care that he couldn't see me. This little bitch needed to fucking pay attention. I was going to get the fuck out of here, and he wasn't about to stand in my way. The bars of our cell prevented me from strangling him out of sheer frustration. Though, I had a sneaking suspicion that I wouldn't be able to kill him. Not if I wanted Ashera to gather as much power as she could before taking on Tomas.

"I don't *know*!" Judah stressed. "Now shut the fuck up. They're coming."

"Who—?"

"*Shut. Up.*" He hissed.

With a slam, the door to our cells opened, and I released an involuntary hiss as light flooded the room. Fuck that was bright. My eyes were slow to adjust, but I could make out the shape of a male—not nearly as large as I was—walking up to the bars.

"Maggots." The new male's voice was bored and dry. "You're going to have to share what's here. I voted to have you fight to the death over food, but I was told you're both too valuable for death." I rolled my eyes.

Once my sight cleared enough, my gaze shot over to Judah. He was huddled in the corner of his cell, arms wrapped around his knees with his face turned away from the door. The man looked as though he had no fight left. That wouldn't do. My instincts told me we were going to need this asshole.



Judah

LET THAT WEIRD, demonic giant get the shit beaten out of him. If I made myself small enough they wouldn't come after me. I hoped. Though, with someone else in the dark with me, I felt... odd. I knew that the large demon next to me was frustrated with me. I hadn't realized how far I'd slipped until he started engaging with me.

I winced a bit. It had been my poor habit of getting lost in my books that resulted in my easy capture. I couldn't be sure how long I'd been down here. The last thing I remember, I'd been trying to get Winta out of our

arranged marriage. It wasn't fair that she would be forced to marry me simply because our parents had dictated it. We'd become good friends in our childhood, and I hadn't wanted to force something on her. We weren't mates. I wanted to wait for my mate, and I had a sneaking suspicion she did as well. I wanted her to be able to become queen of Qamar in her own right. She shouldn't be tied to someone who wasn't her mate.

I had been studying Dunya's history and the laws of each kingdom in my library. I don't remember anything after that. I shook my head as my gaze swung from the wall in front of me to the large demon in the cage next door.

When I'd said he was a big fucker, I hadn't been lying. The male was *massive*. I was surprised his wings could fit in the cage with him, though I doubted he'd be able to fully extend them in there. I wasn't exactly small, but I was nowhere near Malachi's size.

"Here." The guard thrust the bowl of slop so it slammed against the front of our cages, whatever was inside sloshed around with a bit of it splashing over the edge. "Try not to kill each other over it."

When the guard was gone, I uncurled myself from my corner. Even though the never ending darkness had once again consumed us, my gaze moved to where I'd last seen the demon. When I'd first been placed down here, I'd been beaten everyday. They hadn't even bothered to touch him yet. I shouldn't be surprised. He was still pretty mean looking and had clearly been well fed and trained up until his point of capture. I wouldn't want to fuck with him right now either.

"Come on, king." Mal's voice shocked me out of my thoughts. "We might as well attempt to keep our strength up."

He was...sharing with me? Confusion coursed through my mind. Why the fuck would he share with me?

"Judah," Malachi snapped. "Get your weird ass over here and eat. If we're going to get out of here, you need to fucking eat."

I huffed. "You're lucky I'm locked in a cage," I grumbled.

I hadn't realized that the demon could hear me, but his chuckle told me he'd heard my reply. Oh well. I slid over to the front of my cage and reached through the bars for the slop bowl. "This shit is going to be nasty," I warned. "Just... Don't think about what you're eating."

"Got it."

We ate as fast as we could. I refused to think about what was put in the bowl. I knew my body needed nourishment, and so I ate without question.

“Now, back to how long you’ve been in here.” Mal’s voice sounded closer, as though he’d stayed at the front of his cage to chat instead of moving around like he had earlier. “Who was ruling Shaytan when you were put in here?”

The question confused me. Shaytan has had the same ruler for hundreds of years. “The king died?”

Malachi blew out a breath. “Yeah. I helped make sure that fucker had his head mounted on a pike.”

Holy. Shit. My mind – with thoughts that had once been as slippery as water – sharpened into acute focus. The king of Shaytan had been murdered? My breathing sped up. This was...astounding.

“So you now rule Shaytan?” I asked slowly. If I was speaking with the current ruler of Shaytan, that meant the person who orchestrated my imprisonment was thinking bigger than Sahira. Which was very, very bad. Too many implications spun through my mind, and for the first time in I didn’t know how long, I felt a surge of something. I wouldn’t go so far as to call it hope, but if more than one royal was locked away down here, surely people would notice. I highly doubted Malachi had an identical twin brother. His disappearance would therefore be noticed...right?

A barked laugh shook me from the churning in my mind. “No. I mean, in a sense I am.” What the fuck did that mean? “I’m mated to the Queen of Shaytan.”

“Queen?” The shock that colored my voice made me cringe. I wasn’t upset by the thought of a queen, not at all. I was merely surprised that she’d been able to become queen, especially of Shaytan. That kingdom had been so backwards. “There’s a queen?”

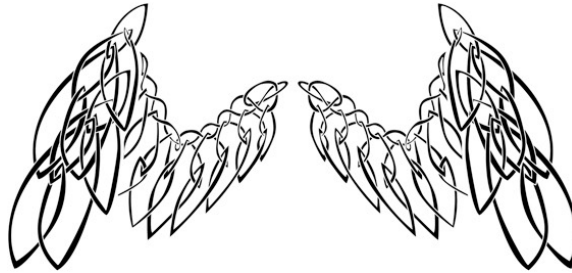
“Yes. Ashera is now Queen of Shaytan.” The pride that flooded Malachi’s voice had me smiling. “She hasn’t been queen long, though.”

“Let’s see,” I mused, “there had been a large flood in Qamar the year that I was taken down here. One so large that it had almost reached Juniya. That flood happened about a week before.”

Malachi’s sharp inhale didn’t bode well. I braced myself.

“That was almost seventy-five years ago.”

DAIMON



This time, I wasn't letting my queen get away from me. Never again was I letting her leave my sight. I had come too close to touching her again, holding her in my arms like I had done so many years ago. It was a feeling I had never forgotten, even in my darkest days, or during the centuries alone.

Being close enough to remember exactly what it felt like? To see her interact with her other mates, knowing what I knew of Ashera's life before? It was torture. It was a punishment even worse than the one Keres had inflicted on me all those years ago.

I needed to taste Ashera again. I needed to feel her powers flow between us, to carry her mark on my skin once more.

This time, I wasn't coming back to the Void. If it was the last thing I did, I was going to find Ashera, and help her win this war. I strapped my blade to my hip and tossed the essentials into my satchel – some smaller knives, squirrel jerky I had preserved, and my latest knitting project. I had made it with Ashera in mind, so it was only right it came with me. Besides, with that many mates, I wouldn't want for future projects.

I wasn't quite sure how I was going to get around Keres's restriction on me to remain near the Void, but I was fucking determined.

Fuck Keres for ever separating us. Fury simmered in my belly, low and hot. I was a fucking *god*, so why was I still here? I tossed my satchel on my back and stormed to the front door, ancient and wooden. I hated this door. I hated everything it stood for, but I also just hated the ugly splintered mess. Why had I spent so much time hating the slab of wood without doing anything? It represented time forced away from my mate, who needed me.

Time spent wondering if she had died in the Void, unable to be reborn. Time spent buried so deep in my grief that I nearly missed when Ashera had been reincarnated. Time spent knowing she was out in the world, in danger, and being unable to go to her until she had found most of her other mates. With a wild roar, I ripped the door off its hinges, tossing it far into the Forest of the Void. I couldn't see where it landed, but from a distance, something shrieked as the door hit it. Probably another idiot wandering too close to the Void anyways. Let my last interaction with that shitty piece of wood be to take a meal from the magic that swirled around me.

My anger was turning into something different, a kind of excitement I hadn't felt in centuries. The thrill of rebellion, and the burn of desperation clawed at my skin. I was doing this. I was doing this for *her*. I was once again following Ashera into the heat of battle, only this time, we were going to raze the earth and all those who stood in our way. This time, we would rip the souls of those who had wronged us out of their bodies and subject them to the torture they'd wanted to submit my mate to.

I called to the magic of the earth and the wind, letting my eyes close as a power I hadn't felt in ages surged in my blood, flooded my bones, and washed through every nerve ending. This was what it felt like to be truly powerful. To be in control. I slammed my hands together in the direction of my cabin, and watched the pitiful wooden shack ignite. It burned so brightly in the dim light of dawn, and a feral grin grew over my face. In a matter of minutes, there would be nowhere left for me to return, so I'd have to make this work. I also knew that Keres would feel the magic I had used to set it aflame. Good. I wanted her to know I was coming.

I wanted her to know we were coming.



Winta

THE FUNNY THING about being mated to someone with more than one mate? We all felt each other's pain. With Mal taken, and Caspian set off on his own, all I could feel was Ashera's pain, echoed and multiplied through all of us. Every one of us, in our own way, felt the loss. Which only added to the miserable sensation.

I wanted to take it all away and to make everything right for her. I wished I could bring Malachi back, and tell Caspian not to leave. What good would any of that do? I couldn't stop Mal from being kidnapped, and I had no way to reassure her that he would be okay. None of us could feel him through the bond at the moment, and that was terrifying.

After a while, you got used to how certain people felt and sounded through the mate bond – especially how they felt in the middle of an orgasm. But Mal was just...gone. Empty. Nothing. It was unsettling, and I couldn't even begin to imagine the thoughts running through Ashera's mind.

I hoped like hell he was okay, not just for Ashera's sake, but all of ours. The pain radiating from my precious mate—I just wanted to make it stop. The soul deep ache that radiated out of her had my breath catching several times without warning. It made me realize that she had felt something similar when I—Visa—had died. My hands clenched by my side. I refused to believe that Mal was dead. I wouldn't let my mate go through that pain again.

We were off to Sahira. Jacobi and Ambrose stayed back to wait for the Malak troops; Caspian had set off with a small contingent to do whatever it was he planned to do with his fae magic. I'd had no idea it was possible to search for someone like that until Ashera had explained it to me. I still didn't really understand how it would work; I just hoped that it did. That left just myself, Thorne, and Ashera along with our shifter army, and the forces from Juniya. We were on foot, not wanting to draw more attention to our arrival than necessary, so Ashera and I rode on the back of Thorne's tiger form at the head of both armies.

We had no idea what state Sahira would be in, but I had my guesses. Being the kingdom of witches, Sahira had a thriving black market even when Judah—the real one—was in power. Some spells were too powerful for even the witches to control, and some required ingredients deemed unsavory or immoral. When Judah first rose to power, he had tried to strike down on them, squashing the dark alley trades, and the backroom sacrifices. With him out of the question...what kind of kingdom would we be walking into?

Ahead of me, Ashera was sitting stiffly, her hands gripping Thorne's fur like it was the only thing keeping her together. *Shit*. She ached and mourned for Malachi, in a way I probably knew better than her other mates. Visa was

a part of me, and I could still hear Ashera's screams when she realized what had happened to her—me—that night. I could still feel her arms wrapped around me, and the way her tears soaked my flayed skin. That wouldn't happen to Mal – we wouldn't let it. I wrapped my arms around Ashera, squeezing her tightly.

"Precious," I murmured. "Talk to me. Don't hold it in."

She looked back over her shoulder at me, her face framed in that perfect golden hour before dusk. What I saw on her face broke my heart. "I'm just so scared," she whispered, barely loud enough to be heard over the marching troops behind us. "I'm so fucking scared."

Beneath us, Thorne rumbled quietly. He was feeling her emotions too, and was trying to reassure her the best he could in his animal form.

"Oh, Ashera." I brushed her hair away from her neck, exposing her shimmering skin. I gripped her shoulders, rubbing at the tension there. "We're going to get him back. I swear to you, we'll get him back."

She sniffed and nodded, leaning back into my touch. "We better, or I'm going to kick his fucking ass. Who does he think he is, getting himself kidnapped like that?"

I laughed quietly. "I know you would, precious. He'd take it, and tell you that you were the most beautiful woman he had ever seen and then ask for more."

Ashera looked over her shoulder again at me, this time with a small smile on her face. "He would, wouldn't he? He's a fucking pushover when it comes to me."

I smiled, pulling her back flush against my chest, and resting her head in the crook of my neck. It was good to see her smile, even if it was only for a moment. We just needed to keep her going until we found Mal.

I knew that Ashera wouldn't be thinking of herself at a time like this. My precious queen rarely thought of her needs, instead choosing to focus on those around her. Malachi was usually the one to always think of Ashera first. Not that the rest of us didn't, but the incubus was the one to lead in that way. So I would take up that mantle. I would make sure that we all put our mate first, and that she got what she needed from us.

I had felt her orgasm with Caspian before he left, but she hadn't fed from him. She needed to keep her magic strength up, especially after using so much so quickly recently. We were headed to the witch kingdom, and it

would be prudent to ensure that Ashera could wield her own magic without hesitation. I could ensure that she had everything she needed.

“Precious,” I murmured against her hair. “You’re going to need to feed.”

She stiffened against me. I placed a finger against her mouth as my lips moved to brush against her ear. “Don’t argue, Ashera,” I scolded. “We don’t know what we’re going to face, and you need to be at the top of your strength. So you’ll feed from me.”

Thorne started to purr beneath us, the vibrations hitting both our clits and sending a wash of warmth through us. I could feel how much Ashera was enjoying the feel of Thorne’s rumbling body. I maneuvered her in a way that allowed for more pressure against her clit while I slid one hand up her shirt to play with her nipple. I nibbled my way down her neck, before biting down more forcefully near her shoulder.

She shuddered in my arms and whimpered, “Winta.”

Gods, I loved the sound of my name spilling from her perfect lips.

“Don’t worry, precious,” I soothed. “I’ll take care of you.”

Thorne started to purr harder, and I readjusted Ashera so I could slide my other hand into her pants. I didn’t want us to stop the army as they marched. I also happened to like the idea of the soldiers behind us smelling what I was doing to our beloved queen. I wanted them to know that she was marked by the dragon queen of Qamar.

“I want you to scream my name when you come, precious. I want the soldiers behind us to know how good I make you feel.” I licked the bite mark, and she moaned.

I slid my hand into position and then leaned my body forward, forcing Ashera to put pressure on my hand. Thorne kept purring, which resulted in my hand now vibrating against Ashera’s clit. I allowed the heat of my dragon to surge through my veins and heat my hands as I pinched the sensitive nub.

Ashera shuddered and moaned louder, grinding down against my hand. “Winta, oh gods.”

“That’s it, precious.” I pinched her nipple as I slid two of my fingers into my queen’s soaked pussy. I loved how wet our mate got for us. “Ride my fingers like a good girl.”

Thorne’s purr picked up its pace again which had Ashera crying out. I used the heel of my hand to rub against Ashera’s clit as I thrust a third

finger into her. My other hand continued to torture her nipple, and I set my mouth against her neck, sucking hard.

“I want to feel you clench around my fingers, precious,” I whispered, nipping at her ear. “Soak my hand. I’m so thirsty for you.”

“Winta,” she whimpered, grinding down harder against my furiously vibrating hand. She was getting close; I could feel it through the bond.

“That’s it, precious.”

My fingers continued to thrust inside Ashera’s sweet pussy. I crooked them so I could hit her g-spot as I continued to rub against her clit and pinch her nipple. I felt my teeth shift into my fangs as my own excitement grew to match my mate’s. Leaning in, I sank my fangs into her shoulder, not enough to draw blood, but enough to add the perfect bite of pain to Ashera’s pleasure.

That was all she needed to erupt. With a scream of my name, Ashera’s pussy clamped down around my fingers as wave after wave of pleasure soared through our bond. I came with her, and if the now shuddering saber tooth beneath me was anything to go by, so did Thorne.

Once she stopped convulsing against my hand, I pulled it from her pants and also removed my hand from her shirt. I tipped her head so she could watch as I licked my fingers clean, my dragon rumbling in pleasure at the taste of our mate.

“I can’t wait until I can lick you all night,” I murmured before placing a gentle kiss on Ashera’s mouth. “Now rest.”



Ashera

I HAD NEVER BEEN SO grateful for my mates, and for everything they did for me, as I was right now. Not only had they sacrificed so much for me, but they were absolutely selfless when it came to Mal being missing. No one was looking at his missing as a benefit for them, one less person to share me with. It was all about getting him back.

We would get him back.

I tried to push down the bond again, but was still greeted with only silence. *Where are you Mal? Come back to me. Please.*

Nothing. Only the quiet sounds of my own thoughts, and the soft thrums of my other mates' heartbeats. *Fuck.*

I pressed down the bond toward Caspian instead, and got a gentle push back. He was there. Safe. Just focused on whatever he was doing. I was going to have to trust him. He wouldn't have gone off on his own unless he knew he would come back to me.

I hoped. It was Caspian, after all. He had worked through so many of his biases for me, but some things were harder to change. It would be a lie if I hadn't considered the fact that he might change his mind at any point, and decide that all of this was too much effort for him. That *I* was too much effort for him.

Trust. I had to have trust in all my mates if this was to work. If Malachi was to come back to me, if we were to find Judah, deal with whatever bombshell Daimon had dropped on us – I had to trust that it was all going to work itself out. I needed to have faith in our abilities as a whole if we were going to succeed in changing Dunya.

Rising on the horizon, Sahira's capital city was larger than I expected. Crafted from granite, the walls that encircled the city rose higher than any others I'd seen in the other kingdoms. Every 100 feet or so, a tower speared the sky. Behind the walls, only a few buildings were visible—aside from the palace. Those few appeared to be made from the same granite the walls were made out of, while the palace was made out of a shining blue stone-like material. I couldn't be sure exactly what it was from this distance, however. I squeezed Winta's hand. I turned to glance at her out of the corner of my eye. "We're here."

Winta tightened a braid, and checked the blades against her thighs. "We need to be ready for enemy attacks at any point. Thorne?"

He growled beneath us, and through our bond I could feel his senses shift to the defensive.

The walls grew closer, the sun beginning to set over the horizon. Winta gave orders to her generals, and to the Fae generals to be on watch, before we pushed closer to the city entrance. We were all on guard, expecting an attack from the Sahiran forces at any point, but to our surprise, no one showed.

The watch towers rising above the gates were unmanned, a ragged flag blowing from each window.

"Winta," I whispered. "Is this...weird?"

She frowned. “Very. I don’t know what’s going on here, but I don’t like it. Something is wrong.”

While Sahira wasn’t known for their army like Qamar was, they still had powerful forces. With Judah missing and not in power, we had expected the army to be controlled by Tomas—through Judah’s twin, and a formidable resistance to push back against our arrival. Not...this.

We passed through the open gates quietly, the only sounds that of our armies’ footsteps. Where was everyone? We paused just inside the gated plaza, taking stock of our surroundings and figuring out what we should do next. I climbed down to the ground, spinning in a slow circle.

Winta jumped off of Thorne’s back, shaking her head. “Sahira...they have an underbelly they don’t like to acknowledge. Black magic markets. Stuff that Judah was doing his best to tamp down on. The army was always out in full swing to make sure they stayed in line, and to manage control. I don’t know where they’ve gone. They should be here, it’s almost dark.”

Thorne shifted, filling the dusk air with the sounds of cracking bones and twisting skin. “It’s not just that. Where the fuck are all the people?”

Thorne was right. Where were all the people? It was just about supper time, witches should be milling about, on their way home to their children, but the streets were dead.

Out of the corner of my eye, a small shape darted past. I whipped my head around to see a child running across the plaza, barefoot and cloaked in a dirty white sack. Thorne reached out and grabbed the child, holding him up like he would a kitten by the scruff of his neck. “Kid. Hey. Where are all the people?”

The child looked terrified, his gaze spinning wildly from side to side, his legs pedaling as if he could run away from Thorne in mid-air. A soft glow began to burn around his skin, murky green in color. The child was too young to be in control of his magic, but it was there just the same, humming in the background.

“Thorne,” I scolded. “You’re scaring the poor thing!”

“Whoops.” He grinned, and spun the child to face him. “Sorry about that kid. Just wanted to know where all the people are.”

Thorne bent to put the child back on the ground, and just as he did, a woman’s scream broke through our conversation. “Put him down! Put him down now, if you know what’s good for you!”

Thorne dropped the child, who fell to the ground in a cloud of dust, and we all turned to see an adult witch storming toward us, finger pointed.

“I don’t know what you want, but you will not lay a hand on my child,” she snapped. “I’m more powerful than I look.”

Thorne held his hands up in the air, and the child scurried over to the woman, arms outstretched. “I’m sorry! I meant him no harm. We were just trying to figure out where all the people are! It’s like a fucking ghost town in here.”

The witch scooped her child up into her arms, still glaring at Thorne. “It’s not safe to be on the streets. You shouldn’t be out here either, if you know what’s best for you — army or no army.”

I stepped forward. “Ma’am, we mean you no harm. We just want to know where the people are. We’re here to help.”

She softened a fraction, and spoke quietly, cheeks pinched. “It hasn’t been safe on the streets since our King — gods bless his soul — got sick and took to his bed. The sickness, it changed him. It’ll be dark soon. You should find shelter.”

She turned, the child still cradled in her arms. Winta spoke up, calling out to her once more. “But where are the people?”

The child, still glowing with his barely there magic, lifted his head up from his mother’s shoulder. “Hiding,” he whispered. “They’re hiding.”



Ambrose

MY LITTLE QUEEN and her shifter mates had left the day before, taking the armies with them. They would be in the capital by now, or at least close. I wanted to poke the bond to make sure she was okay, but I didn’t want to disturb her. The winged fucker and I remained behind in what was left of Masas, awaiting his forces from Malak – small as they may be, we didn’t need much to keep control of the city anymore.

I sat in my empty dining room, leaning back in my chair. I had a flashback to what life had been like before Ashera, before the annoying mate group I had come to appreciate. Me, alone at this dining room table, forever awaiting my father who never showed. Really, it wasn’t much of a

fucking surprise that we were struggling to find him now. Tomas had a knack for that – only showing up when it suited him.

I twirled a steak knife on my finger, contemplating where my jackass of a father might be. One by one, we had been clearing out his hidey holes, so there weren't many places left for him to go. Besides, surely this man couldn't have that many friends. If I hated him, his people despised him, who actually liked him enough to hide him?

I flicked my wrist, watching the knife imbed itself neatly in the wall in front of me. Stone was difficult to land the knife into, but not impossible, and I had years of practice. One knife for my father's heart – cold and dead, even for his own son.

I picked up the knife next to me, spinning it the same as I had before. What I needed was Ashera, blonde, lush, and perfect. I needed her in front of me so I could feed on her succulent blood, and she could feed off my energy, the same way I had felt her feeding off Winta as they marched. Another flick of the wrist, and it chipped off more of the marble, sticking out of the cold wall. One knife for my father's eye – for being blind to anything other than his own wants and needs.

The knife to my left was next, spinning round and round. I wasn't dense though. My mate needed me too. Even though there were so many of us now, I knew each of us gave her something unique. I liked to think I gave her strength, but I knew she would laugh at that if she were here. My little queen would probably say I made her laugh – even though I wasn't funny.

Flick. The knife stuck into marble next to the other two knives. One final knife to my father's cock – striking his vanity and everything that went along with it.

Tomas was as good as dead. He better hope he stayed hidden as long as he could, because I was coming for him, and I would enjoy every moment of watching him die.

"You okay?" Jacobi's voice called out behind me, causing me to stiffen.

He had snuck up on me. I turned around to see the angel looking put together as usual – not a feather or hair out of place. He was so perfect it made me want to roll my eyes. Despite his flaws, of which there were many, I had come to appreciate his company. "I'm fine," I muttered, ignoring the knives embedded in the wall behind me. "You need something?"

Jacobi nodded. "The troops from Malak should be here in a few hours. I wasn't sure if you wanted to leave tonight or wait until the morning, when it'll be full light again."

"Tonight." I got to my feet, eager to see my little queen once again. "We leave tonight."

"Very well. I'll get my things ready." Jacobi turned, but paused at the door. "Ambrose."

"Yes?" I tucked my hands into my coat pockets.

"We'll find him, you know. We'll find Tomas, and take care of him. Ashera won't be in harm's way ever again."

I sighed. "I know."

Jacobi smiled. "Good. Make sure whoever is tossing knives into the wall knows too." He turned and stalked out, and I was left alone in the dining room once again.

I looked at my knives, neatly tucked into the wall next to each other. A thing of beauty, really. Even more beautiful would be when they found their true home, slicing into my father's unworthy skin.

THORNE



I slid my gaze to my mate for an instant before returning my attention to the child and his mother. Leaning down, I whispered in Ashera's ear, "So that was creepy as fuck right?"

Her sharp inhale and the tickle down the mate bond told me she was trying hard not to laugh. This was incredibly serious, I knew that, but I wouldn't pass up an opportunity to bring some form of joy to my mate. That and the little kid was creepy as all fuck. I mentally shuddered. Were all kids that terrifying?

Ashera took a step forward, and my hand lashed out to grab her wrist. After the child's warning, I wasn't about to let my mate get too far away from me. We didn't have any answers as to why the people of Sahira were hiding. The woman had told us that even with an army we shouldn't be here. I allowed the hold I had over my tiger to slip a little bit so my senses were heightened even more than normal. I couldn't smell anything that alarmed me. Everything seemed normal – at least as normal as it could for a completely deserted city and a weird mother and child pair.

"We can protect you," Ashera said in a soothing tone.

"No one can protect us, not anymore." The mother clutched her child closer before running off faster than I would have thought possible.

Creepy. As. Fuck.

"I don't like how this feels," Winta whispered from the other side of Ashera. "Maybe we camp outside the walls until Ambrose and Jacobi can get here?"

I felt Ashera stiffen, and I wrapped an arm around her waist. I knew she wanted to continue the search, hoping that Tomas had been the one to take Malachi. Since the bastard had last been sighted here...I couldn't blame her for hoping that Mal would be here too. I doubted it, however. What were the odds that Mal would be taken to Sahira when it was our next reasonable destination after we'd taken Masas? Wherever the incubus was...it wasn't here. I wouldn't crush her hopes by voicing my thoughts aloud, though.

"Kitten," I murmured. "It's okay. We aren't leaving Sahira. We're just letting the men camp outside the gates and hope it's a little bit safer. Plus the demons that can fly should be here by midday tomorrow."

Her shoulders slumped in my embrace, and I gripped her tighter. "I was hoping to get a couple of hours of searching tonight."

"I know," I soothed. "But what good are you to Mal if you get yourself taken or hurt?" I traced the outline of her collarbone, letting my touch ease the tension in her body. She was so stressed – too stressed. It wasn't healthy for her. My kitten needed to be in a good state of mind if we were to survive this.

Ashera sighed. "You're right. Mal would kill me himself if he knew I was endangering the armies or myself for him. We'll camp just outside the gates and start the search first thing in the morning. Jacobi and Ambrose better be here by then."

"There's my girl." I squished her against me, her perfect body molding to every part of mine. I nodded to Winta over Ashera's shoulders, and she began calling orders to the troops to march back outside the walls and make camp. The entire time we were retreating through the gates I couldn't shake the feeling we were being watched. Every time I turned to look, no one was there. My tiger couldn't sense anyone either. I could've sworn we were being watched though. Would've put money on it.

Probably by that creepy ass kid and his mom.

By the time the sun set over the horizon, we had a large camp set up in the plains just outside the gates of the city. It made me happy to see the fae soldiers bunking with the shifters, and knowing that this was the life Ashera had pictured for all of us. People making friends with those they had once considered outsiders, loving each other, laughing and joking – not fae hating shifters, or shifters hating succubi. I crossed my arms with a smile, and from the tent next to me, Winta sidled up.

“It’s nice to see, isn’t it?” she whispered. “Everyone getting along like this.”

“Absolutely. Too bad the feelings don’t seem to be shared by the *lovely* people of Sahira.” I rolled my eyes and looked over to Winta, who was glaring at me.

“Don’t be mean. There’s obviously something wrong here. I’m sure once it’s all straightened out, they will be wonderful friends.” She bit her lip, and I couldn’t help but laugh.

“You realize we’re talking about the same people who were best friends with your dad, right? I don’t have high hopes here.”

She sighed. “Look at us, Thorne. We’re different than he was. Look at our people. One bad soul doesn’t ruin everyone.”

I knew she was right, but it didn’t mean I wasn’t scared for my mate. She deserved happiness, light and joy. Not the stress Sahira had brought her so far. I conceded to Winta, “Maybe. I guess we’ll see in the morning, won’t we?” I smiled at her, and then began walking through the tents, clapping my hands. “All right people, let’s get some sleep. First watch, take your positions. Everyone else, I expect you in bed. Let’s go!”

The generals got the idea and began herding their troops into their tents. Soon enough, the rows were quiet, with only soft lights here and there radiating from the cloth tents. Our army was incredible, and I knew they would soon be asleep. I headed back toward the tent I shared with Winta and Ashera, the night air silent and warm around me.

I still couldn’t shake the feeling that something was wrong. It was uncomfortable, weighing down my bones, but my tiger couldn’t sense anything, so all I could think was that maybe I was still just weirded out by my interaction with the child. That had to be it.

Our tent was lit by the soft glow of a lamp, probably fueled by Ashera’s magic. Inside I could hear her talking with Winta in a quiet voice, and for a moment, I stood outside listening in contentment. This was all I had ever wanted. A mate of my own, a family to come home to. Even despite all of the chaos and drama we were living through currently...this, this was everything to me. I tucked inside the tent, smiling at the two of them.

“Hey,” Winta greeted me. “All okay out there?”

I nodded. “First watch is on patrol, and the rest of the troops are in their tents. We’re good for the night. But you,” I looked to Ashera. “Need to

feed. What you took from Winta while we were walking wasn't enough to sustain you for tomorrow."

Ashera glanced over at me with a smile, her pheromones getting me hard in an instant. Whenever she did that, I got so hard it fucking hurt to be in clothes. I could tell by the way Winta was shifting on her feet that she felt just as hot for our mate.

"Get naked," I growled. "Both of you."

Ashera crossed her arms over her chest, an impish look crossing her glorious face before she whispered, "Make me."

I hadn't thought it was possible for me to get harder than I was, but I was pretty sure that I was about to rip the seam of my pants. My gaze flicked to Winta, who had moved to the side of the tent with an amused look on her face. She wanted to watch me dominate our mate, or at least see who came out on top if we were to fight for dominance right now. I knew that my kitten loved to watch her mates battle it out, so why hadn't it occurred to me that she might want to participate as well?

"Kitten." I snarled, allowing my tiger to rush to the forefront. "I told you to get naked. Naughty mates who don't listen get punished."

The sweet smell of Ashera's arousal was almost overwhelming. I had to take a moment to adjust myself in my pants, needing some sort of contact to ease the now painful ache in my cock. Judging by the look on my sweet kitten's face, she knew exactly what the fuck she was doing, too. She wanted me to lose control.

Be careful what you wish for, kitten.

Without giving her another moment to sass back to me, I lunged. Ashera was fast, spinning away from me. I snarled and turned to keep her in my sight. "Come on, kitten. You know you want me to mount you, fuck you raw, and come so hard and long that it runs down your legs."

The pheromones in the air got stronger. My nails lengthened into claws, and I felt my canines lengthen as my fangs shifted as well. She was trying to call out the beast. I would give her the fucking beast. Based on how my vision changed, I could tell that my eyes had shifted as well. I smirked. Ashera had never seen me partially shift before. She was in for a wild ride.

I dropped my claws to the waistband of my pants and snapped them off. I hadn't donned a shirt after shifting back in case I needed to change into my tiger again quickly. My tail unfurled. While I was still mostly humanoid, the appendages was long enough to drag on the ground behind

me. Just as in my tiger form, the tail would help me maintain my balance at increased speeds. I'd need it if I was going to show my little kitten how a good girl should behave.

Ashera's sharp inhale had a smirk tugging at the corners of my lips. "I suggest you do as you're told, kitten."

"Make. Me." The little minx had the audacity to stick her tongue out at me.

"With pleasure."

I launched myself at her, knowing full well that she would spin away from me again. The feline in me wanted to play with her a bit before we ended things—in our favor. So when Ashera sprinted to the other side of the tent, we played along, chasing after her, and then again the other way, a smirk sprawled across her perfect face. I knew if she actually wanted to get away from me, she would. She was just trying to dominate a man who was half tiger, which was never going to happen.

My gorgeous mate was laughing by the time my tiger decided he'd had enough and needed to feel Ashera's pussy pulsing around my cock. So when I lunged for her again, I made sure that she could only go in one direction. My tail immediately lashed out and wrapped itself tightly around her neck. Gods, it felt good to be in control.

She froze, her eyes wide as I used my tail to pull her flush against my body. "Winta," I snapped.

"About time." Winta's voice was filled with laughter, so I shot her a glare.

"Get yourself naked and then get our mate naked," I snarled, my voice more tiger than man now.

With a shrug, Winta sauntered forward to stand behind our mate. Her fingers trailed along our Ashera's sides, and she leaned in to nibble at her slender, golden's neck. My kitten let out a low moan and leaned back into Winta's caress as much as my tail would allow. I let Winta continue to gently touch and nibble on Ashera as the dragon divested her of the fighting leathers plastered to her body.

I fought a grin as Ashera's gorgeous, golden skin was revealed inch by succulent inch. My mouth watered as I fought the urge to lick and suck all of the satin smooth skin that came into view. I wanted my kitten to suck the life out of my cock before she rode me until the entire camp could hear her

screaming my name. I wanted to breed her, see her round and ripe with our young.

The thought surprised me. While I'd always dreamed of having a mate and a family, I had never had this sort of primal need to fill a female so full of myself that there was no way she wouldn't end up pregnant, but just the thought of Ashera round and glowing with pregnancy had my cock jumping.

"Do you see what you do to your saber tooth tiger, precious?" Winta whispered in Ashera's ear. "He's so hard he's leaking."

Ashera's eyes snapped to me before she dragged her gaze down my body to focus on my rigid dick. Her tongue peaking out as she licked her lips had my tail tightening around her neck. I had to force myself to allow Winta to continue to strip our mate of her clothes. Thus far, Winta had only removed Ashera's top. I needed her naked. Now.

"Hurry up," I growled around my fangs.

Winta chuckled as she paused to raise an eyebrow at me. She could tell I wasn't in the mood for her to argue, that my tiger was riding me hard to fuck my mate raw. I'd be surprised if we got any sleep tonight if my animal got his way. He wanted to fuck Ashera over and over again until we had nothing left to give her and she was covered in our come from head to toe.

"I said, hurry the fuck up." The snarl that rose from my chest should have alarmed me, but I was too far gone, too lost in my mate to care.

Winta's eyes flashed to those of her dragon, a sign that she didn't appreciate being told what to do, but she probably knew how far gone I was, so she didn't argue. She had been brought to the edge by her dragon more than once or twice herself—it was a compulsion we couldn't control. Instead, she allowed her own claws to emerge, and she sliced through Ashera's pants with one swipe.

Thank the gods. Any longer, and I would have ripped Winta from Ashera and taken care of matters myself. It wouldn't have been pretty. I was desperate, and willing to do whatever it took to have my perfect mate in my hands.

"His tiger is too close to the surface to go easy on you, precious." Winta's warning had Ashera's gaze narrowing on my face. I gave her a stiff nod. "He's going to want it hard and fast."

A small moment of clarity allowed me to shake my head. "No." I released Ashera's neck and lay myself on the floor. "Both of you should

ride me.”

“Your cock is mine,” Ashera growled. “Winta can ride your face.”

Winta chuckled before nodding her head in agreement. She then started to shuck her clothes while my mate dropped to her hands and knees. My kitten crawled her way up my body, dropping a light kiss to the head of my cock as she passed.

“You can’t fill me with your come until it’s dripping out of me if someone else is riding it,” she pointed out.

“You’re right,” I agreed. “Now sink that hot pussy on me.”

My tail wrapped itself around Ashera’s neck again as Winta lowered herself over my face looking at Ashera. Two beautiful women riding me? So long as one of them was my mate, I’d die a happy man. I got to work eating Winta out as Ashera quickly moved to hover over my cock.

“I love the way the two of you look,” she murmured, a smile in her voice. “I can’t wait to see Winta come on your face, Thorne.”

My dick jumped. The thing had a mind of its own when it came to Ashera. It would do anything she wanted, whenever she wanted. Especially if what she wanted was this.

“Come on, precious.” Winta’s hands sank onto my chest as she moved her hips against my mouth, soft pants filling the air. “Take his thick cock deep into your pretty pussy for us. I want to watch you come on him again. Be his good girl.”

Ashera’s arousal soared again. Gods, she smelled amazing. She shifted over me before her hand closed around my dick, lining me up with the opening of her pussy. My hips lurched up, trying to fill her as I continued to lick and suck Winta, my hands now moving to grip Ashera’s hips. I’d intended to slam her down on my cock, but she had other plans. My tiger was less than thrilled, demanding we lay claim to our mate.

With slow, teasing movements, Ashera started to work her way down my cock. I growled low in my throat, but didn’t stop my ministrations on Winta. My mate wanted me to eat pussy; I’d eat pussy like the fucking king I was. Anything she asked of me I would do, happily. I just needed her pussy to strangle my fucking dick. *Now.*

Ashera’s thighs clenched, refusing the pull of my hands against her hips as I tried to bury myself to the hilt. A disgruntled groan from Winta told me that I’d forgotten about her in my quest to move Ashera. I mentally shook my head and decided that I’d let Ashera do as she pleased with me and

focus on getting Winta off. I knew that my kitten would love to see her other mate fall apart screaming on my face. She was a succubus, after all, and I was determined to give her a feast. No shifter worth their salt would ever let their mate go hungry, regardless of the type of hunger. This one just happened to be the fun kind.

Keeping one hand on Ashera's hips – the urge to feel her moving against me was too strong to remove both – my other hand moved so I could slide two fingers into Winta's wet pussy. I then attached my lips to her clit and sucked. Winta's hips bucked against my face. The shifter queen placed her hands on my chest so she could lean in closer to our mate as I slid my fingers deeper, crooking them ever so slightly to hit the right spot I knew would send her arousal over the top. Winta's groan told me I was doing the right thing.

"Feed, precious," Winta moaned. "Watch as my general eats my pussy and feed off how much I enjoy your eyes on us."

Ashera released a low groan and slid further down my cock. Her pussy clenched around me, forcing my own groan from my lips. I started to purr, allowing the vibrations to course throughout my body, which caused both my dick and my tongue to move along with the rest of me. Both women let out breathless pants at the feel. I thrust my fingers harder and deeper into Winta, as I continued to allow my tongue to move against her clit. My other hand remained clamped on Ashera's hip, a silent plea to end my torture and take me fully inside her.

After a few tense moments of watching me please Winta, Ashera finally, *finally*, sank fully onto my painfully hard cock, but the little minx didn't move. No. She stayed there and pulsed around me, content to watch me unravel Winta before taking her own pleasure.

"What a good girl, precious," Winta praised. "You take his cock so well."

She leaned forward more, and Ashera did the same, the two of them kissing and touching one another above me. Gods. I wished I could see better, but I was more than happy for them to simply use my body for their own pleasure. I was part of this and that was all that truly mattered.

"I need you to come on Thorne's face, Winta," Ashera purred. "I want to watch you come before I can ravage Thorne."

Oh? I redoubled my efforts between Winta's legs. I needed to get her off so my little kitten could ride me until she strangled my cock. At this point

I'd be fine if Ashera squeezed my dick off when she came, so long as it stayed there and my own release dripped down those lush golden thighs.

Winta's breath hitched, and I knew that our queen was playing with other sensitive areas of her body. I could feel the tightening in Winta's pussy, indicating that her release was near. I sucked long and hard at her clit, rubbing the pads of my fingers against her g-spot. Whatever Ashera did in tandem with me, set Winta off like a rocket.

The shifter queen came with a scream over my face, her hips jerking and thighs shaking. Ashera started to slowly grind down against me, making sure to sweep her clit against my pelvis with each rotation.

"Your release tasted delicious, dragon queen." Ashera's voice was soft and husky, almost sounding as though she were drunk on Winta. "Rest now, my love."

Winta sagged a bit and removed herself from my face. Ashera immediately leaned down to press her lips against mine. Her tongue slipped out to lick my lips, tasting the dragon on them. She pulled away slightly and said, "I love the taste of her on you."

Fuck me.

I couldn't stop my tail from tightening around Ashera's perfect neck, squeezing it just enough that she gasped. She had wanted to tease me, toy with me. Now I would gladly return the favor. My tail pulsed around her neck, letting her know exactly who was in charge, and then loosened, my sweet mate taking in a deep breath.

"Did you like that, kitten?" I purred. "Did you like a taste of what it feels like when I'm in charge?"

"Mmm..." Ashera moaned.

"One day I'm going to fuck you with my tail, Ashera. I'm going to fuck you with my tail, hard and fast, and you're going to beg me for more." I grunted, imagining Ashera's lush body stuffed with my tail and my cock. She would look fucking divine. Edible. Perfect.

I lifted the fingers I'd buried in Winta's pussy and pushed them into Ashera's mouth. Her eyes were hooded as she began to not only suck on my fingers, but fuck me hard and fast. Her hips slammed down against mine with surety. I moved my hand from her hip and started to stroke her clit, feeling my cock swell inside her as my release barrelled toward me. But I wouldn't come, not without Ashera.

"So tight, kitten," I growled. "You fuck me like you own me."

“I do own you,” Ashera snarled after removing my fingers from her mouth. “You are *mine*.”

“Good girl,” I praised. “I am yours. Just like right now, this sweet, tight pussy is all mine.”

The hand she had abandoned moved to grip her hip so I could thrust up as she thrust down, causing her breath to leave her with a woosh each time. Her stunning tits bounced frantically with each downward stroke.

“Now I need you to come for me, kitten. I need you to soak my cock. Strangle it. Own it. Can you do that for me?”

I watched as her eyes rolled back before fluttering to meet my gaze again. She bit her lower lip and nodded. Ashera moved her hands from my abs to her nipples, pinching and squeezing the tight tips. Her pussy started to flutter violently around my cock, and I had to grit my teeth to keep from flooding her right then.

“Come. Now.” I lightly pinched her clit and rotated my hips so my cock hit her just right.

Ashera’s head flew back, her hair tickling my balls, as she slammed down on me one last time. A pleased scream tore past her lips as her pussy clenched tightly around my dick. I came at the same moment, my body vibrating with the release. Both of my hands were now gripping her hips, holding her tightly to me, not wanting to let her go.

When we came down from our high, Winta was still next to us, a wide grin on her face. “I’m not even a succubus, and I could have fed off the energy you two just put out.” I chuckled. My eyes remained on Ashera, watching as her chest heaved and her hands slid down her body to rest against mine. Gods, I loved this woman.

“Better?” I asked.

She nodded before moving off of me. I immediately got up and went to grab something to clean us all up with. While I loved making a mess out of my kitten, I didn’t want to leave her like that considering where we were. One day. One day, I would cover her with my come and leave her like that so everyone knew who she fucking belonged to. Even she wouldn’t be able to question if she was mine or not, because it would be crystal clear. And when the day came that she swelled with my child... well. Everyone better watch out then.

Once we were cleaned up, we all got into bed together, limbs intertwined. I started to purr in an effort to help soothe the women to sleep.

We all needed to be well rested for what was ahead of us. Finding Mal and Judah, stopping Tomas, figuring that shit out with Daimon...None of it was going to be easy, and we wouldn't be able to do it without proper rest. But if we had known what was coming for us in the night, I would've never let myself fall asleep.



Ashera

A PIERCING SCREAM split through the night, startling me awake from my deep slumber. I bolted upright – trying to place where it was coming from – when another one followed it, before being abruptly cut off.

“Thorne? Winta?”

“On it.” Thorne’s voice didn’t sound remotely tired. Either he hadn’t slept at all, or the screams had shook him as much as they did me. Winta was on my other side, already out of bed and clothed.

I threw on clothes and a cloak, before darting from the tent, running out to be with my people and see what the hell was going on. The immediate vicinity appeared strangely normal. Soldiers were starting to emerge from their tents, looking around in confusion. The source of the screaming wasn’t readily apparent. My gaze darted along the narrow alleys that ran between each canvas dwelling, searching.

Another scream, to the left this time, again cut off midway through. Before I could sprint in that direction, a scream echoed to the right of me. My heart slammed in my throat, and my fists clenched at my side.

“What the fuck?” I snapped, dread filling me at the realization that we could be surrounded.

I needed to take to the air to see what was going on. There still wasn’t anything happening close enough for me to determine how to organize our troops. I could feel Winta and Thorne through the bond. They were feeling the same spike of adrenaline I was, but it didn’t seem as though either had happened upon the source of the screams.

My wings snapped out, and I launched myself into the cool, night breeze. My wings beat quickly in an effort to get me as high as possible, as

fast as possible. When I finally made it to a decent height, I searched the landscape below me.

“Oh Gods.”

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JACOBI



Flying while holding anyone other than Ashera wasn't how I wanted to spend my time. I knew that flying was faster than traveling on foot, so I didn't complain whenever I needed to carry someone, and since Ashera had wings of her own...I was often stuck with one of the wingless males in our party. Ambrose was silent, scowling out at the night sky around us.

His emotions were volatile, which wasn't new. I didn't think I'd ever felt him calm unless it was right after fucking Ashera. Which was honestly understandable, but lately, there was a hint of something other than anger coursing through him. His love for Ashera was usually always present, but this was something different. Something, I wasn't sure the vampire prince even knew he felt.

Shame. Guilt. All directed toward the actions of his sire. He was ashamed that Tomas had had such a strong influence on him for so long, and guilt over not trying to put a stop to his father sooner. I wouldn't say anything until Ambrose acknowledged these feelings, but I would make it clear to him that there was no need to feel either emotion.

While it was true that we were a byproduct of our parents and how they raised us, for many, breaking free of the bonds our parents shackle us with was difficult, especially since many weren't even aware those shackles existed. Parents raised their children to view the world in the same way they did, which was a natural instinct. Unfortunately, most parents did not explain to their children that their way of viewing the world was merely one way to do so. They failed to do this for many reasons: they either didn't

know any better, they didn't care, or they thought that their way was the only right way.

The onus fell on us, as adults, to then go out into the world and attempt to view it through a wider, broader lens, rather than strictly through the lens handed down to us by our parents.

Something I, myself, had failed to do by not allowing my older sister to rule. Ambrose had grown up with a father who wanted to crush his spirit at the very least, kill him if possible. So it was understandable that he would view the world through a very narrow, hostile lens. It was a trauma response. One I'd make sure he dealt with once this was all over. I didn't want him to get swallowed by these feelings, and not just for Ashera's sake. I'd come to care for all of the males in our bond group as brothers and didn't want to see any of them suffer.

Ambrose didn't often take kindly to such advice, though. Which made complete sense, growing up as he had. He had only himself to rely on, and the idea of trusting anyone else must have been terrifying. De had come to trust Ashera, to love and cherish her, and hopefully with time, he would see that I only came from a place of good as well.

He would either eventually accept it, or he would kill me. I was fairly certain there was no in between with Ambrose. Love or hate. Life or death. He saw the world in absolutes. Ashera loved him for who he was, and I had learned to do the same for all of her mates.

"What the fuck is *that*?" Ambrose snarled, his hand whipping out to point directly in front of us.

I shifted him slightly so I could get a better look and felt the blood drain from my face.



Ashera

"THORNE! WINTA!" My scream had both my mates looking up at me, and I pointed. "Witches!"

Thorne immediately shifted, shredding his clothes in the process. He barreled down the narrow alleyways in the direction I indicated, causing the

soldiers to fling themselves out of the way or risk being knocked over. Winta started shouting orders, rallying the troops not currently under attack.

“They’re coming at us from three fronts,” I yelled.

A flash of dark green energy flew at me, and I narrowly avoided getting hit. Whirling to face the threat, I left the gathering of the troops to my mate. Thorne could help those on one front. I’d help with the second front, and Winta could tackle the third. I had to hope that would be enough.

The screams were coming closer together now. It was almost as if having been found out made the witches more determined to attack. Why wouldn’t they flee knowing they’d been caught? Something wasn’t right.

My mind raced in an attempt to put the pieces together. The child we ran into earlier said that the witches in Sahira were hiding. His mother said even an army couldn’t protect us. I didn’t understand. Were these the witches that had been in hiding earlier? What the fuck was happening in this kingdom?

I landed with a soft thud and tucked away my wings. This attack was eerily similar to the attack my mates and I had faced in Masas. Which was when I realized that we weren’t just facing witches.

Horror rocked through me when I realized what was happening. The witches were attacking with members of all the other species, demons included. When I’d been aloft, I thought the sheer number around us was the missing witch population, and I was partially correct. There were witches attacking our ranks, but the majority of those involved in the violence were other species.

Demons used sex to fuel their magic. Vampires used blood. Angels used emotions. The fae used nature. Witches? Witches used souls. They were able to trap and harness the souls of the dead. The more powerful their magic, the more souls they could wield. And that power was displayed through glowing markings all over their body. It was almost as though their skin couldn’t contain all of that energy, and it had to burst out somehow.

The witches in front of me had glowing markings, but they weren’t vibrant in intensity. I was used to shimmering markings that lit up the area around a witch. These witches’ markings barely lit their faces in the gloom around us. I had no idea what the cause was, but I was certain it wasn’t a good thing.

“Shield wall!” I yelled at the soldiers rallying behind me. “We need to keep them out of the heart of the camp!”

I didn't want to pull a stunt similar to what I'd done in Masas's capital, not without any of my mates close at hand for me to feed off of. It would waste far too much energy and would only push the witches toward Winta and Thorne. Instead, I cracked the earth open just wider than a large shifter and deep enough that it would be a pain in the ass to crawl out. I could do this until our camp was surrounded. It would work in the short term, but we'd need a better solution fast.

"Do not let anyone out of that trench!" I screamed. I stayed just long enough to make sure the soldiers understood, and then took off, racing to protect my people.



Jacobi

ASHERA'S ARMY was surrounded on three sides by attacking forces. I tugged on the bond in an attempt to pinpoint my mate. I didn't want to waste precious time searching for her if I could help it. I released a breath when I felt an absentminded answering tug. She was close.

"Get ready, princess." I angled my body to land as close to Ashera as possible. "This is going to be rough."

"You know I like it rough, birdbrain," Ambrose quipped. The bloodlust that usually lay dormant within him surged to the surface. He was ready for whatever was about to happen. "Now let's protect our mate."

Indeed.

I released Ambrose so he landed on one side of Ashera and then planted my feet on her other side. She was sweating and had small flecks of blood spattered over her. Her eyes roamed over both of us briefly, ensuring we were okay, before she returned to her task of splitting the earth down the middle between our armies and the attackers. It wasn't like her to not be on the offense, so she must have had a plan in place already.

"I need to get this trench to stretch as far as possible," she panted. "I have no idea where the fuck these assholes came from."

"Why the hell are demons working with the witches?" Ambrose asked incredulously.

“I’m eager to figure that out myself,” Ashera responded. Her gaze flicked back over to the vampire. “Weird shit is going down here. We need to end this as quickly as possible, or at least hold out until daybreak.”

“Daybreak?” I questioned. “Why daybreak?”

Ashera continued moving as quickly as she could. Soldiers were cutting down the enemy, and she always made sure to creep just into the thick of enemy lines before opening up the trench. This would certainly keep me and Ambrose busy. We immediately rushed to ensure she was protected and could focus solely on her task rather than also attempting to defend herself. My love flashed me a grateful smile.

She answered me as she worked. “When we got here earlier, it was full light out. No one was around. The capital was a ghost town. I think if we can hold out until daybreak we’ll be okay. At least for today.”

Well that was ominous. What had I let her walk into? All three of them no less. If I had let them run right into a trap while I wasn’t there I’d never forgive myself.

I could feel how tired she was. It had been smart of her to refrain from ripping the ground open as violently as she’d done in Masas, but creating something this large also took an immense amount of energy. Energy she would need to replenish.

“I know that drinking blood helps you heal faster, but do you think it’ll also help restore your magic? Just enough to finish the trench.” I glanced around. “I don’t think it’s wise to stop for anything else before sunrise.”

“I’m not sure,” she huffed, wiping sweat from her brow. “I can try.”

“It might not work as well,” Ambrose cut in, “but it should help a bit, especially if you have no other wounds to worry about.”

I moved closer to her, and Ambrose snapped at the soldiers nearby to form a protective wall around the three of us. “Here, my love. Drink.” I tilted my head to expose my neck. “You’ll need to drink from both of us.”

“I won’t take much,” Ashera murmured. “I don’t want you both too weak or out of it.”

Ambrose and I both scoffed at that. “Take as much as you need, little queen. We’ll be fine.”

Ashera launched herself at my neck, her fangs slicing through my skin with ease. I hissed at the sensation, and my arms wrapped around her to pull that succulent body tight against me. My cock throbbed with each pull from her mouth. Gods. Despite knowing my mind should remain on the battle

raging around us, I couldn't help but yearn to bury myself in Ashera's hot, wet pussy. I'd never had the need for sex before her, and now I couldn't get enough. There was so much I wanted to do to her. So much I *needed* to do to her. *Focus, Jacobi, focus...*

It was no use. I was no better than any of her other mates, desperate for her as I was. Her slick mouth pulling at my very lifeblood was driving me mad. Just as I was about to hook my hands under her thighs and lift her to fit that tight body against me better, she eased back. I was pretty sure a whimper made its way past my lips at the loss. Our gazes met and held, and without thought, I leaned down to press a light kiss to her lips. It didn't even faze me that I was tasting my own blood on her mouth. All I cared about was her.

"Now me." Why must that fanged fucker always be so damned impatient? I glowered over at him. "Shove off, birdbrain." Ambrose flipped me off.

I didn't feel the need to lower myself by stooping to his level, but I did fight the urge to throat punch the bastard. Later...I'd show him who was more dominant later. Now was certainly not the time. Releasing a sigh, I nodded down at Ashera before gently handing her over.

"Jacobi's blood helped," Ashera said to Ambrose, but I could sense there was more. "Not as much as I would have liked, though."

"Perhaps your body's preferred method of magic absorption is sex," I suggested. "While you have other powers, and can draw some magic from those sources, it isn't your body's preferred method." I shrugged. "We'll have to ask Daimon."

"Don't talk about him," Ambrose snapped. "Come on, little queen. Take what you need. Even if it doesn't fill you up as much as sex, it's still better than nothing. I can't have you getting hurt tonight."

Ashera seemed to agree with him as she latched herself onto the vampire's neck in the next instant. Ambrose released a low moan, his eyes sliding shut. The need surrounding the two of them was a thick fog, making it hard to breathe without having the urge to adjust myself. I needed to get a better grip over my powers. All I could focus on was the two of them, and what they were feeling in this moment – need. Lust. Love. Desire. Sensations that were overwhelming when I felt them just from my mate, but from both of them at once was a different high altogether.

Locking my abilities down, I watched as Ashera lightly licked the side of Ambrose's neck before pulling away. The vampire prince looked at our mate as though she hung the stars twinkling above us. His overwhelming devotion and adoration for Ashera broke through my walls and surged throughout my body, heightening my own feelings for my mate. She was everything to me. The sun, the moon, all of the stars in the sky. I was sure I wasn't the only one who felt that way. There was no question in my mind, she was the center of our universe, and we were lucky enough to be the center of hers.



Ashera

THE BLOOD HELPED, but not enough. I was still weak, but I needed to keep going. I needed to protect my mates and my people, even if all I wanted to do was crumple into a ball. I would keep going—for them.

I would need to take blood from Jacobi and Ambrose again before I could finish the trench around our troops. Not that either of them would mind. My sweet little angel seemed ready to take me right then and there while I sucked at his blood, and I was already well aware of Ambrose's love for the act. I couldn't blame him. Drinking someone's blood from their skin like that was an overtly sensual act, even when it shouldn't be. It was a heady feeling. Powerful. Ambrose's theory that it would give me a slight boost so long as I wasn't otherwise physically injured had been correct. It just hadn't given me as much of a boost as I was hoping for. I loved sex, even when I wasn't feeding, but needing to stop because I was using vast amounts of magic on the battlefield to fuck one or more of my mates wasn't practical.

Another thing I would need to talk to Daimon about. He didn't seem to have the need to fuck every other second. Then again, I hadn't spent much time around the god. I needed five minutes with him when we weren't in a battle, or he wasn't munching on someone's heart. *Fuck, why was that as attractive as it was?* I wondered again, where the fuck he was. He seemed to have great luck appearing when I needed him – or didn't need him – the most, and yet now he was nowhere to be seen.

Speaking of the asshole...Suddenly, the enemy wasn't getting quite as close as they used to. When I looked up from my task to see what was happening, my jaw dropped at the sight before me.

Standing before me like a vengeful granny, Daimon stabbed a witch in the temple with a knitting needle, the other gripped tightly in the opposite hand. He had a maniacal grin spread across his face, and he laughed as blood sprayed up around his head. I cocked my head to the side for a moment as I studied him. Was this the same male who'd eaten a heart as casual as you please in front of me? Watching him stab both needles into the neck of his next opponent had me nodding my head. Yep. Absolutely. That was the same male. Daimon gave me whiplash with his actions, and now here he was, stabbing people with *knitting needles*. Were all gods this unstable, or was it just him?

"Hello, goddess!" Daimon called in a cheerful voice, sending a flirty wink in my direction. He then blew me a kiss before rounding on his next knitting victim. "If your magic starts draining, I can take over."

Gods. Everything was so easy for him, wasn't it?

"Are those...*knitting needles*?" Ambrose shouted. When I glanced over at him, his eyes were riveted to the god wielding a crafting tool with murderous ease. "Holy shit. They *are* knitting needles!"

Ambrose's face lit up, and his eyes got a weird sheen over them. If I didn't know any better, I'd think my vampire princess had just fallen head over heels in love. I shot a glare over at the other god, now tempted to take his knitting needles and shove them up his ass. Ambrose should only look at *me* that way.

"Ashera!" The child-like excitement in Ambrose's voice had me fighting a smile despite my murderous thoughts. "He's using knitting needles to slaughter people!" My princess clapped his hands with glee. "I want a pair!"

Fuck me.



BY THE TIME the sun rose above the horizon, I was covered in dirt, blood, and sweat. My body ached from needing to use an almost constant stream of magic to fend off the multispecies army. My theory proved to be right,

and as dawn crept higher, the attacking armies had slowly faded off, until all that was left were a few witches and demons in the ditch. Whatever was happening here was only going on in the dark. Which meant two things. First, something fucked up was definitely going on in Sahira. And second, we had one day to either figure it out or get our armies out of here before we were attacked again.

I looked around at my people and my mates, proud of what we had accomplished overnight. We had taken some losses, but for the most part we had managed to keep most of the hits to the witches' side. The shifters were fierce in battle, and the fae army wasn't about to be second best. The two of them combined were a volatile mix.

Daimon had helped me finish the trench. I supposed instead of shoving his knitting needles up his ass, I could hold myself back. I shot Ambrose a look, making sure he still had eyes for me and me alone. I could hold myself back so long as my vampire mate didn't look at the god like that anymore. Over a pair of fucking knitting needles. Gods, was that all it took to win Ambrose over? I wished I had known that ages ago, because that would've made things a hell of a lot easier for all of us.

My mates and I were all exhausted, and I could see that the high of battle was starting to drain out of Daimon as well. We needed to clean ourselves up, eat, and rest. I wasn't sure if we'd be attacked again tomorrow night, but I knew that we wouldn't be able to keep fighting night after night.

Before I sat down to strategize, I needed to feed.

Ambrose was closest to me, and I grabbed him and pulled him toward the tent. "You're coming with me, princess."



Ambrose

I OPENED my mouth to comment, but Daimon's massive hand latched onto Ashera's dainty wrist, stopping her dead in her tracks. I sucked in a breath, secretly hoping the giant god would insist on joining us. I didn't mind watching my little queen with the other males, anything that brought her pleasure gave me pleasure as well. But the thought of Daimon fucking

Ashera to within an inch of her life had me so fucking hard I almost couldn't breathe.

Gods, please let me watch Ashera take god cock. I didn't even care if Daimon didn't want me to participate. I would happily watch my little queen's tight pussy get demolished by this massive male's dick.

"Not without me." It was a threat and a promise all rolled into one. The delivery was rumbled out in a deep bass that had Ashera shivering. A smirk tilted my lips. My little queen wanted him. "You have an issue with that bloodsucker?"

I snapped my gaze away from my mate and over to Daimon. His large body was wound tight, ready to beat the ever loving shit out of me if I said no. Good thing I had no intention of disagreeing. I shook my head. "No issue. So long as my little queen wants you to fuck her, I'll happily join in."

I could hear the others suck in shocked gasps. I narrowed my eyes, but didn't cast them a glance. After the hard time I'd given Thorne—fucker deserved it with his ribbed penis—they probably assumed I would give Daimon here a hard time too. Thing was, I actually liked Daimon. Thorne was just a prick I needed to get used to. Daimon...well, he was a *god*.

Ashera studied him for a minute. It was easy to see that she wanted him. There was no question in anyone's mind that he wanted her. The only real question was, had he done enough to warrant a place in Ashera's heart? Did she recognize that he was a part of us? If I could, I sure as fuck hoped she could.

"Come on then." She nodded her head to the tent.

Oh. My. Gods. This was really happening. My cock throbbed in my pants, and I had to fight the urge to fist bump the air in excitement. I was about to have a threesome with a god who killed people with knitting needles. He was just *so cool*.

Fuck. I didn't even care if his dick hung to his knees. I'd let Thorne worry about the beast between Daimon's legs. I was merely in awe that he existed. I was sure Ashera was curious about my fascination; I'd have to talk to her about it soon. I wasn't romantically interested in the god. Ashera was the only one for me. I simply wanted to be just like Daimon when I grew up.

When the flap of Ashera's tent swung shut behind the three of us, the silence that followed felt charged. Hungry. I could smell the lust oozing off the three of us, and knew that Ashera was probably already feeding.

“Before we do this,” Ashera murmured, her gaze turning to pin Daimon to his spot. “I won’t grill you with questions right now, but you need to agree to answer anything we ask you in the future, without being coy. Understand?”

The heat, already present in Daimon’s bright blue eyes, flared hotter. He was a stronger man than me for keeping his hands to himself. I’d have plastered my body to Ashera’s and locked my mouth onto whatever I could reach. How he managed was beyond me. As it was, I unconsciously took a step closer to my mate, inhaling her delicious scent in an attempt to get her to infiltrate every part of me.

“Agreed.” The god’s deep bass had Ashera’s pupils dilating as her lust saturated the bond and the air around us.

This is so happening right now. For once in my long life, I wasn’t sure what to do with myself. Part of me wanted to watch the two of them try to tear each other apart. Another part wanted to be in the middle and have the two of them tear me apart. So many options, so little time.

I couldn’t stop myself. I stepped forward, and pressed my mouth against Ashera’s, kissing her hard. She tasted like everything I had ever craved, like blood and sweat, mixed with the sweetest honey I had ever known.

Beside me, Daimon groaned, and I stepped to one side, holding Ashera’s hair away from her face in a loose ponytail. “Taste her,” I urged. “Taste her and tell me she isn’t the most delicious thing.”

Daimon didn’t need to be told twice. He closed the distance between them, framing Ashera’s face in his massive hands and kissing her deeply. “Gods, Ashera, I have waited thousands of years to do that again.”

I was quiet, thinking about what he had just said. *Again?* But if Ashera didn’t question it, I wasn’t going to either. Another thing to circle back to, but I found I didn’t mind this time.

“I’ve waited eons to fuck your sweet little pussy,” he murmured. “I’ve waited countless nights to hear you scream my name as I stretch you more than you’ve ever been stretched.”

My cock was throbbing between my legs now, desperate to be inside my little queen. My feet, as though driven by my dick, moved my body behind hers. I licked her neck, dragging my fangs across her delicate skin. “Do you want to be fucked by the god, Ashera?” I whispered, my hands sliding down her waist and across her hips. “Do you want Daimon to stretch you?”

“Fuck, yes, please.” Ashera moaned as I bit down gently on her neck. Not enough to feed, but enough that the blood welled up into my mouth, letting me taste her.

I blinked, and our clothes were gone. Over Ashera’s shoulders, Daimon smirked. “An old trick, but a handy one, to be sure.”

I looked down over Ashera, needing to see Daimon’s god-like cock for myself. As expected, it was absolutely massive, thick and long, and everything Ashera needed inside her right this fucking second. Oh my gods, the idea of that sliding in and out of Ashera’s pussy while I fucked her ass...I was going to die of excitement.

Daimon reached around Ashera, picking her up and holding her above his waist. My little queen was panting, already hungry for that monster, and I couldn’t say I blamed her. “Hold on tight, goddess,” he said. “You’re in for the ride of your life.”

He slid Ashera down his cock, my perfect mate crying out as she took him inch by inch.

“You’re such a good girl,” he cooed. “Such a good goddess taking my cock like you were born to.”

He looked over to me, giving me a nod, and I jumped to attention. I had been so focused on watching the two of them I had forgotten I was a part of this too, standing there like an idiot with my dick in my hand. It had better places to be. I fumbled in the bags on the floor, looking for the lube I knew Ashera always carried, and slathered it on.

Ashera was moaning and crying out as Daimon was slowly pumping his monstrous cock in and out of her. I wanted him to destroy her, to leave her begging for more, but I could understand the need to warm her up first. I stepped behind her, running my hands down her smooth back. Gods, she was gorgeous. I fitted my cock between her ass, and slowly pushed my way past the tight muscle. I moaned loudly, realizing Daimon’s cock was so large I could feel it against my own as if they were right next to each other. I could only imagine how stuffed my little queen must feel.

I could feel her pulling off the sexual energy in the air, all of us desperate for, “More,” she begged. “Please, more.”

With a quick look to each other, Daimon and I began to pick up speed, both of us thrusting hard and fast into Ashera. She moaned and mewed, pawing at Daimon’s shoulders as she struggled to hold on. Her ass was so

fucking tight around my cock, Daimon's dick sliding past mine and providing delicious friction with each thrust.

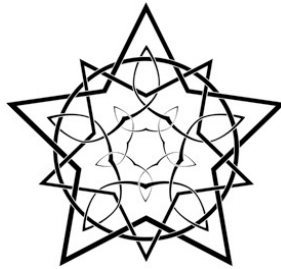
Ashera was going to be sore after this. Sore, but fed and so fucking sated. Thorne was probably outside stressing out about the size of Daimon's dick, but all I could think about was how fucking good she felt in this moment. How good they both felt.

I was going to explode in Ashera's ass. I couldn't wait to see my little queen filled with my release, dripping with the god's release from her tight pussy. Holy fuck, this was even better than anything I could've dreamed. Then, in the blink of an eye, he was gone, and I was left alone fucking Ashera.

What the fuck?

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CASPIAN



I t had damn near killed me to stay away when I felt Ashera fighting and using up a large amount of magic through the bond. My mate needed me, if for nothing else than to replenish her magic stores. I huffed out a frustrated breath and ran my hand down my face. Instead of being with her, I was on top of a fucking mountain in the middle of fucking nowhere about to do something that could kill me. Maybe I had lost my mind. Something had gone wrong somewhere along the lines, and I was insane. That was the only rational explanation I could come up with for why I was here and not with Ashera.

Unfortunately, I was perfectly sane, and doing exactly what I was supposed to do—no matter how much it hurt. For Ashera...no. For Malachi, I'd do it. I loved my mate. Sometimes it terrified me how much I loved that female. While it might not be apparent to the others, I respected the fuck out of Mal. I knew that he was Ashera's rock, which made him important to the rest of us. But it was more than that. His unwavering determination and loyalty to the group—not even batting a damn eye whenever someone new was added because he knew it was best not just for Ashera but for all of us—had earned him my respect and loyalty in kind.

No one took what belonged to us, and Malachi was ours.

I'd instructed the men that had accompanied me to the summit to remain below, blocking anyone from climbing higher to reach me. I didn't want to admit that the blast of power I would release could knock all of them out if they were too close, but there was that, too. *Fuck. Fuck. Shit.* This was it.

Taking a minute to center myself, I closed my eyes and allowed myself to sink into the sounds of nature that resonated all around me. It had been far too long since I last communed with the earth in this way. My magic bubbled excitedly inside me, pleased that I was opening myself to its source. After I calmed my mind, I removed my shoes and socks. I would need to physically connect with the earth for this to work.

Assuming I didn't die.

I clapped my fist over my heart and whispered, "Long may she reign."

In the next moment, I lifted my foot high off the ground and closed my eyes, allowing myself one large inhale before slamming it back down on the dirt below.

I'd never stretched my power this far before. It was terrifying and exhilarating at the same time, a brilliant surge of power I wanted more of, but didn't dare get used to. I could see the whole of Dunya shining in bright relief. There were splotches on this map, representing those I had a connection to. I needed to focus on my bond with Ashera. A mate bond was one of the strongest magics to exist, and so I should be able to use that bond to focus my sight. Should, being the key word.

I found a bright patch of light in Sahira. Given the intensity, it appeared that there was more than one of my bond group in that location. Which meant that wasn't Mal. I hoped they were okay. All of them, but especially Ashera. Okay, well maybe I wasn't as worried about Ambrose, but that was a minor point. *Fuck. Stay focused, Cas.*

My power, already stretched to its limit, protested. I could feel exhaustion creeping in, but there was no way I was backing out now. I pushed harder, throwing my attention away from the bright flickering light that represented my mate and the others, searching for a fainter glow on the tapestry before me.

My body started to shake as I continued to push my magic, my mental grip on the bond was crushing. My legs threatened to give out. Where the fuck was he? He had to be somewhere in Dunya. If I worked hard enough, stretched my power far enough, I should be able to find him. My lungs struggled to provide my body with the requisite oxygen to remain standing. A bead of sweat trickled down my temple. I could do this. For her. For Mal.

I grit my teeth, squeezing my eyes shut as I gave one last push of power. I needed to do this, for all of us.

Before I passed out, I saw the faintest flicker. Shock rolled through me. I didn't feel my body slam against the ground.



Ashera

A MOUTH SUCKLING my nipple woke me from my nap. I hadn't even realized I'd fallen asleep. After Daimon disappeared, Ambrose had fucked me with his fingers in my pussy, and his cock in my ass until we both came. I wouldn't lie, I was damn frustrated. We needed to figure out how to get Daimon to stay with us. Another tug at my nipple had my eyes cracking open to see Winta, brown eyes glittering, hovering above me.

"Precious," she rumbled. "While I'm loath to wake you, we're going to need you to decide what you want the army to do."

I grumbled a bit before wrapping her braids around my hands and tugging her closer. While I loved the hard feel of the others' bodies, there was something soothing and arousing about the soft curves of a woman's body. Winta was mostly lean muscle, but she still had generous breasts, rounded hips, and thighs I wanted to bury both my teeth and fangs into. As far as I was concerned, Winta was perfect. Not that I would ever tell the men that—sensitive egos and all. I could only imagine Ambrose's face if I told him how much I craved the lush skin of a woman. Then again, maybe he would forgo his jealousy and be all for it. He was a wildcard in that respect. I wouldn't worry about that now because Winta was here in front of me, and I had plans for exactly what I'd like to do with this alone time.

"Why don't you feed me before we handle the rest?" I murmured against her lips.

A pleased groan left my mate before she sealed her lips over mine, her teeth nibbling and tongue slipping out to request entrance to my mouth. My tongue sought hers in a battle for dominance. Just because she was on top didn't mean she was in charge. I felt Winta's body vibrate slightly against mine and pulled away to look her over.

My mouth dropped open when I saw that she had partially shifted and now had a long, thick dragon tail. The appendage lazily swished side to

side. My gaze returned to Winta's face, and her smug smile had me grinning as well. I loved that she kept me on my toes.

"What are you planning to do with that?" I asked with a saucy wink.

One of Winta's hands closed around my throat as her eyes flashed with her dragon. "I'm going to make you come apart, precious." Her grip tightened along the sides of my throat as she leaned down to nibble on my ear. "I'm going to ruin you. Even your other mates won't be able to compare."

I let out a low groan. My hands tightened on her hair reflexively. Winta's arousal perfumed the air, and I allowed myself to start feeding from her. She was always so sweet and filling, giving me everything I could ever possibly ask for. And now this?

In a flash, I found my hands tied above my head with some sheets from the bed. I growled, wanting to be able to touch and tease my mate just as much as she did to me. Winta tsked and shook her head, a wicked gleam flashing in her eyes.

"I want you to focus on our bond and feeding, precious." She pressed a kiss below where her hand still rested on my throat. It was a fleeting press of her lips and a flick of her tongue, but it sent heat soaring through my blood. "I want you to feel how much pleasure I get from this. Fill up on how much I yearn to make you scream my name while you come. How I can get off on that alone."

Since I hadn't put any clothes back on after my first feeding, I wiggled against the bonds and Winta's hand, urging her to remove the sheet covering my body and touch me. I needed to feel her soft skin against my own. Feel the calluses on her fingers graze my nipples, my clit. Fuck. I just needed her.

"Are you going to behave for me, precious?" Winta asked. The hand not holding my throat started to drag the sheet off my body. "Are you going to let me fuck you with my tail?"

Whenever one of my male mates asked if I was going to behave, something reared inside of me and demanded that they work to earn my submission, but the same couldn't be said with Winta. With my dragon, I became pliant, putty in her hands. I was sure there would come a time when I would test her, but right now, I wanted her too much. My soul was still battered over Visa's loss. I was still in awe that she had been reborn and we were together again. I would lap up anything Winta gave me. She may call

me precious, but she was the most precious thing in my life. I had a second chance to make my soul whole with all of my mates, and I wasn't about to waste it.

"Yes." I sighed. "Yes, please."

Winta chuckled. With the sheet now out of the way, her hand moved back over my body, fingers stopping just above my nipple. She lifted her head, and we studied each other for a moment before she dipped her head to nip at my lips. "We're going to need to be quick, unfortunately. But you're already soaked for me aren't you?"

"Why don't you find out for yourself?" I grinned up at her.

"As my queen demands."

Winta's hand left my throat and was immediately replaced by her tail. The feel of her hot scales against my skin had me hissing in pleasure. It was so different from when Thorne did it. His tail had been soft and silky. Winta's was rougher, more muscular. I loved it.

My dragon's hand slid teasingly over my nipple before scratching lightly at my stomach. My hips arched off the bed at the feeling. The tip of Winta's tail flicked lightly against my cheek, a soft affectionate gesture that melted my heart, but it didn't distract from the feel of her hand as she spread my legs. The tips of her fingers trailed up and down the inside of my thighs before her fingers dipping into my pussy.

"Mmm," she hummed, a hungry expression passing over her face. She brought her fingers up and licked them clean. "Gods, you always taste so fucking good, Ashera."

Before I could respond, Winta's tail had uncurled from around my throat—replaced once again with her hand—and started to slide slowly into me. I gasped at the feel. It was far more muscular, and so much warmer than a cock, thicker too. My hips arched of their own accord as I shifted to accommodate her.

"Keep your eyes on me," Winta demanded. "If you take your eyes off me, I'll stop. And we don't have time to start up again." I nodded as much as her hand on my neck would allow. "That's my good, precious queen. Now feed."

I did as she demanded, pulling from Winta's desire for me as she continued to work her tail into my pussy. She was giving me time to adjust, but I didn't want it. I just wanted to be full of her. I tilted my hips and said, "Don't be gentle, just fuck me."

Winta's dragon was now staring down at me, her fangs descending past her lip. She took a deep inhale of my scent and a vicious smile spread across her face. Oh yes. I was about to get fucked hard, and I was going to love every minute of it.

I smiled back at her, but the breath was snatched from my lungs when Winta slammed her tail deep into me, hitting my cervix and causing me to wince slightly. The sting from the stretch was delicious, though. I felt as though I'd been stuffed to capacity. A whimper slipped past my lips and my eyelids fluttered, but I was determined to keep my gaze on my mate. I didn't want this to end.

The hand not around my throat lowered so her fingers could stroke my clit with sure, firm movements that had me writhing on her tail. A part of me wondered what it would feel like to have one of my other mates in my ass at the same time. I clenched hard around the tail now thrusting in and out of me at breakneck speeds. I doubted I'd be able to move if that happened, but fuck, I would be willing to try.

"I can smell how wet you are, precious." Winta's voice was deeper, her dragon still very much in control. "Do you like my tail in your tight pussy?"

"Yes," I moaned.

"Do you like how the stretch burns, precious?"

I whimpered in response. She changed the angle of her thrusts, hitting my g-spot with her rough scales with each movement in and out of my body. This new angle, in combination with the speed and her ministrations against my clit had me seeing stars. I struggled to keep my eyes open as my release rushed toward me.

"Gods," I panted. "Winta, I'm going to come."

"That's it," she cooed. "Come all over my tail."

Without warning, Winta leaned down and bit me. Her fangs slicing through my flesh caused me to detonate. I came screaming Winta's name, my vision blurring, and the earth shaking.

My dragon had come back to me, but fuck if she hadn't learned some new tricks.



Daimon

“MOTHER FUCKER!” I roared, releasing my power with the intent to destroy everything around me. My rage knew no bounds. “I am going to rip Keres’s head from her shoulders with my bare hands!” My scream echoed in the silence around me.

I stood, my body steaming and chest heaving, in the rubble of my former cottage. I didn’t want to be back here. I burnt it down with the intention to never return. Except here I was, back in front of the prison I had spent so many years in. No. No. No! I bent down, grabbed a large beam of wood, and threw it as hard as I could with a bellow of rage. I clenched my fists, willing myself to calm down. I couldn’t return to Ashera in this state. My gaze fell on my aching cock. It was seeping like it was crying at the loss of our mate. Because I hadn’t been able to come with her, our bond hadn’t solidified again.

I shut my eyes, attempting to breathe in through my nose and out through my mouth. If I went to Ashera like this, I would pin her to the ground, mount her, and fuck her in every tight hole she had until she passed out. I’d held back earlier. Not all of her powers had emerged yet, and I knew I needed to be a bit more careful with her until they did. But knowing and wanting were two different things. I knew I needed to be careful, but I wanted her to scream my name as I made her come again and again. I wanted to show her everything she was capable of, and even some things she wouldn’t be ready for just yet. I wanted to do all these things to her, to show her an entirely new world, but I couldn’t if I kept ending up back at this fucking cottage. *Fuck!*

I glanced around and realized that I’d been sent back to the Void without any of my things. My left eye twitched when I realized that meant leaving my precious knitting needles in the hands of the other males around Ashera. They had better be intact when I finally got back to them. If they weren’t...I couldn’t kill any of the fuckers, we needed them to ruin Keres. I shrugged. They needed to be alive so we could take over the world, they didn’t need to have all of their appendages attached. Ashera wouldn’t miss a cock or two, I was sure.

Gods, my dick ached. I needed Ashera. I needed my mate. Unfortunately for my sorry ass, I was here, and she wasn’t. She was off with her other mates, and my knitting needles.

I could picture her now, golden skin streaked with blood from a hard-won battle. She’d come to me, a knitting needle in each hand after she had

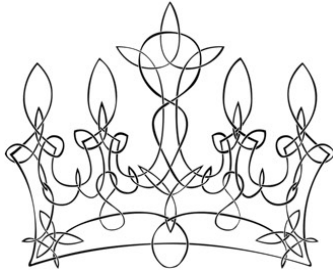
used them to take down her enemies. Fuck. My hand fisted my cock, slowly pumping it up and down. It wasn't Ashera's tight little pussy, but it was better than nothing. I groaned as I imagined her piercing a witch's neck with the sharp point, my hand sliding around my thick length. Oh my gods, she was perfect. She was so fucking perfect.

I could feel my release building low in my core, demanding I come for my mate. Except, my mate wasn't here. It was just me and my hand, and the images of Ashera dancing before my eyes. Ashera, naked, licking miscellaneous blood off my knitting needles. My mate, biting into a heart she had just carved from one of her attackers. My goddess tightly bound by one of my woven creations, my come leaking from her pussy and ass.

Oh, my goddess...the things I will do to you. I grunted, my hand tightening around my dick.

I came with a cry of Ashera's name, my release spilling out over my hand and onto the forest floor below me. That was the last time I was ever coming without my mate.

ASHERA



Sitting around a fire with my mates soothed some of anxiety and anger I'd been feeling lately. I needed Caspian and Mal back – hell, I even needed Daimon here, but having the others close helped me focus. Right now, I needed to focus on what we were going to do. The witches attacking us last night had been a complete surprise, though I felt maybe we should have taken that kid and his mother a little more seriously. Had they let that army know we were outside the city? It seemed unlikely since they seemed to be hiding from something. But was that something those witches?

"I've never seen a witch glow like that before," Winta said, breaking the silence that clung to our group. "All of the witches that I've ever encountered glowed brightly when using their magic."

"I agree." Thorne stood and stretched. "What we saw last night was strange."

"I think the word you're looking for is creepy." I chuckled. He shot me a playful scowl. "I haven't met many witches, but I've never seen them glow so dull before either."

"That boy from yesterday, when he tried to use his magic, his glow was dull." Thorne pointed out.

I immediately shook my head. "The magic didn't feel the same. I think that boy's magic was struggling to surface because of how young he is. The magic from last night felt...tainted."

"That's because they were doing magic they weren't supposed to." Daimon's voice had us all whirling. My body heated remembering the last time I'd seen the god. He had pants on, but no shirt, and he looked about

ready to kill someone. “You fuckers had better not have touched my knitting needles.”

It took a moment for my brain to catch up with what he’d said. I quickly covered my mouth in an attempt to hide my snort of amusement. His eyes narrowed as he looked at me. I shook my head, fighting my smile. I didn’t want him to think I was laughing at him. Which I absolutely was. *Men and their toys...*

“Don’t worry,” Ambrose chimed in. “I tucked them away. They’re safe.”

Of course he had. I raised a brow at my vampire before rolling my eyes. “Should we leave the two of you alone?”

Ambrose scowled at me, crossing his arms over his massive, bare chest. “A man’s killing instruments are sacred.”

“Uh-huh.” At this point my laughter was barely contained. I couldn’t get over Daimon’s obsession with his knitting needles, or Ambrose’s obsession with Daimon. They needed to have a threesome and be done with it—the god, the vampire, and their chosen craft supplies.

Ambrose huffed and glared at me before turning his attention back to Daimon. “You were saying?”

Daimon studied the vampire for a moment before nodding his head. “They were controlling living creatures. That goes against the very nature of their magic.”

“Then how are they doing it?” Winta asked. She was studying the god closely. They were all aware that I’d taken Daimon back to my tent with Ambrose. They’d felt the pleasure down the bond. Daimon was another mate, but it appeared that not everyone trusted the newest addition.

I shouldn’t be surprised. Our bond was something that we had created over time. It wasn’t something that could be forced, and I would never expect my mates to accept another just because I said so. Shit, I wouldn’t have loved them as much if they *weren’t* suspicious. Their suspicion was all out of care and concern for me.

“It’s a practice that was banned by even the gods,” Daimon responded. “The gods who took more magic from souls than anything else discovered it quite by accident.”

I held up my hand. “Wait. What do you mean by that? That they took more magic from souls than anything else?”

Daimon turned his attention to me and smiled. "I'm sure you've noticed that you have the abilities of all the different species?" At my nod, he continued, "When we created Dunya and its masses, we took those traits and separated them. While there are no different species within the population of the gods, we do all have one trait that is more potent than the others. For you, it was always the demonic trait. Mine is that of the vampire."

"I have so many more questions," I mumbled, "but those need to wait. Keep telling us about the witches."

"Those that had the dominant witch trait always had an easier time controlling the souls of the dead. It was how they gained the most of their magic. While I'm unsure exactly how they figured this next bit out, they immediately realized how dangerous it could be. They knew that if they used this ability, those who had the dominant witch trait would be hunted down and killed. Because they'd also realized that those of us that don't have the dominant witch trait couldn't perform this sort of magic."

"What sort of magic?" Thorne snapped. Daimon did seem to have a flair for the dramatic and certainly seemed to like toying with his audience. "Get on with it, fucker."

Chuckling, Daimon shook his head. "Fine. If a witch absorbs the soul of another witch, they're able to control a living soul, not just a dead one. It became very clear that not only would the gods who had other dominant traits start to hunt those with this ability, as they wouldn't want to be controlled, but other witch dominant gods would start hunting each other in order to keep themselves safe. So the practice was outlawed."

"And the gods just...listened?" Ambrose asked. The look on his face told me how skeptical he was.

"Initially, yes. We're actually pretty peaceful." Daimon shrugged. "It was only after we created Dunya and the other species that things started to get out of hand. We thought that we'd taken the knowledge from this land, but it appears that we haven't."

I opened my mouth to ask another question when a shout sliced through the air. The hairs on the back of my neck stood on end and a chill ran down my spine. We weren't under attack again. This was so much worse.



Ambrose

ASHERA SHOT off her seat at a speed that surprised me. I knew she was fast, but this was something else. One minute she was seated and the next, she was gone. Daimon was fast on her tail, leaving the rest of us to scramble behind them. While that shout had sounded alarmed, it hadn't sounded like we were under attack again. Which meant that it wasn't something for Ashera to worry about.

At least, it shouldn't have been.

We raced toward the edge of camp as the sun was starting to dip low in the sky—not a good thing after last night. *Fuck*. We hadn't made a decision about what to do tonight. I hoped that after the losses the other side had sustained they wouldn't be too keen to attack again right away.

I skidded to a halt behind Daimon. There was a small crowd gathered, and people were shouting for a healer. Curious, I leaned around Daimon to see Ashera work her way through the people, her face pale.

"Caspian!" Ashera's shout had all of us pushing the soldiers aside so we could get to our mate and her fae. "Caspian! No!"

He was still alive. I could tell that much. Thank the gods he was still alive. If he'd died...I wasn't sure I wanted to think about what Ashera would have done. Especially with Malachi still missing.

"It's okay." Daimon crouched down beside her. "He's used up most of his magic. He's in rough shape, but we can help him."

"How?" Ashera demanded. Her eyes glittered with determination as she shot Daimon a look.

"Since he's unconscious, he can't draw from his magical source. We're going to need to feed him that magic. I know you don't know how, but I do. You'll need to hold my hand. It'll go faster if we work together."

Huh. So the psycho fucker was good for something other than killing. Color me surprised. Although he wasn't all bad. He did have a nice set of knitting needles.

Ashera studied her fallen mate for a moment before nodding, sticking her hand out to Daimon. I noticed the tremor and couldn't stop myself from moving forward. The others stepped closer too. All of us placed our hands on some part of her body.

"Good," Daimon murmured. "Having you feed her energy will help as well."

The god reached out and grasped Ashera's hand. His was so large that it swallowed hers. He then closed his eyes. Ashera followed suit, evening out her breathing as she did so. I attempted to clear my mind and focus on funneling my energy into Ashera. I had no fucking clue if it was working, but I maintained contact and continued to focus.

Time seemed to slow. Gods, how long did this take? My heart was beating wildly in my chest, drowning out any other ambient noise around me. I hadn't realized I'd come to care about the fae prick so much. But he was one of us. Sure, he was a massive dick, but he was our dick. We wouldn't be complete without him. Ashera wouldn't be complete without him.

Who the fuck was I becoming? Someone who cared about people? That was utter nonsense. Though, I couldn't help but hope Caspian would be okay. I tried to convince myself that it was just for Ashera's sake, but I wasn't entirely sure that was the truth.

Because the truth was, I had come to care about all of Ashera's mates. They were the family I had never gotten to have, and for that I would be eternally grateful.

Not that I would ever tell them that.



Caspian

I SUCKED in a huge lungful of air, my body jackknifing violently upward. A massive hand encompassed my face, stopping my forward momentum abruptly. I swung my arms up, my hands closing around the extremely large, muscled forearm attached to the hand on my face. I didn't know this forearm. Whose forearm was this?

My brain felt slow, muddled. Where the fuck was I? What happened? I tried to remember, but a pounding ache started behind my eyes.

"Just relax, Caspian." That voice, so sweet and beautiful, had my eyes snapping open. I hadn't even realized they were still closed. "You're going to be okay. We'll get you to the tent and into bed."

Ashera.

My mate was here. Almost immediately, my heart rate slowed, and my breathing evened out. Knowing Ashera was close helped to bolster my strength. I took a moment to take stock of my body. I was sore, my muscles feeling slightly shaky, and my head hurt like a bitch. Other than that, I seemed okay.

The hand attached to my face hadn't released me, and I still clung to the mystery forearm. My gaze focused on the hand, following it up to the wrist and massive arm, before finally landing on Daimon's face. I stiffened. He was back?

"Daimon." Ashera placed her hands over mine, gently pulling them away from the god's arm. "Let him go. Jacobi? Can you and Ambrose help Caspian to my tent?"

He released my face, his gaze studying me closely. I just stared back at him. There was one thing I wasn't willing to unlearn; you never turned your back on a threat. I was willing to believe that Daimon was important to Ashera, to us, and our cause, but that didn't make him any less threatening.

Jacobi and Ambrose moved into my field of vision, kneeling to wrap my arms around their shoulders. I didn't think I'd ever admit out loud, but seeing them, being near them, was just as soothing as being near Ashera. They'd become my family. My last thought before I faded into darkness again was that I'd never been so grateful to see them.



AS I LAY in the makeshift bed in Ashera's tent, my mind tried to bring up everything that had happened to lead me here. My thoughts were still fuzzy, and the pain still throbbed behind my eyes. I knew I had been doing something important, but what the fuck was it?

"Caspian?" We were alone in the tent. I'd woken up after being placed on the bed, only to see Ashera wave everyone out of the tent, issuing hurried orders as she did. "How are you feeling?"

I groaned, focusing my attention on my mate. "Like I've been run over."

She gave me a soft smile and sat on the edge of the bed. "That's to be expected."

"My head is killing me. What the fuck happened?"

Her gaze raced over my face, and her hand brushed some hair from my forehead. “You drained your magic.” Her eyes narrowed into a stern, chastising look. “You didn’t tell me that your little mission could kill you.”

Mission?

That’s when it all came rushing back. Malachi was missing, and I’d offered to try to find him. I’d gone off knowing that I could die. Ashera had every right to be pissed at me. I hadn’t told her what looking for Mal would entail, what it could cost me – all of us. I just hoped the information I now had would be enough to ease the anger on her face.

I gave her a sheepish smile before responding. “I know I should have told you, but you would have insisted I stay with you and the others instead of going to look for Mal.” Her lips parted, and I placed a finger over them to stop her. “Malachi is worth the risk, dick slayer.”

Her eyes widened. I knew how I came off, like I didn’t give a fuck. Honestly, I didn’t. Except when it came to Ashera and the others. I hadn’t wanted to like the other males. Hadn’t wanted to respect them. Especially not Malachi. Yet here I was, risking my life for bat fuck because I fucking cared about him, and not just because of what he meant to Ashera.

I groaned internally. I was going soft.

“Caspian...”

“No, Ashera. You aren’t the only one that needs him. We all need him.” I met her eyes, holding her gaze so she could see how serious I was about this. “I hated lying to you, but we needed to find Mal.”

Her breath caught, hope flaring to life in her eyes. “Are you saying that you found him?” The question was asked so softly, I had to strain to hear.

“Yes. I know where he is.” I didn’t smile at the announcement. Now that everything had come rushing back, knowing where Mal was was the easy part. Getting him out alive—with all of us still alive, too – that was going to be the hard part. “You might want to bring the others back in here.”

Ashera shut her eyes for a moment, a tear sliding down her cheek. I stopped its progression with my thumb, adjusting myself in the bed so I could lean my forehead against hers. “We’ll come up with a plan, dick slayer.”

She nodded, pressed a soft kiss against my lips, and then slipped from the bed and out the tent. I could hear her calling for the others. I sure as fuck hoped we could come up with a plan to rescue Mal. The alternative wasn’t an option.



Ashera

CASPIAN HAD FOUND MALACHI. My heart pounded painfully in my chest, hope warring with dread. That meant Mal was still alive, right? I hadn't thought to ask Caspian if his magic was only able to pick up the living, or if it found the dead too. He hadn't said, either.

The others quickly gathered around me. I looked at each of my mates in turn before taking a deep breath. "Caspian found Malachi."

Watching the relief pass over all of their faces, including Daimon's, had me biting my lip. I wanted to cling to that hope.

Jacobi slipped in and wrapped his arms around me, pressing a kiss to the top of my head. "Let the hope in, my love. It's stronger than anything else. Don't forget that."

With a nod of my head, I gestured for everyone to enter the tent. Once back inside, I made my way over to sit on the edge of the bed again. Taking Caspian's hand in mine, I gave it a gentle squeeze.

"I found Malachi," Caspian began, his gaze bouncing between everyone in the room. "He's still alive," –I sagged with relief– "but getting to him isn't going to be easy."

"I hadn't thought it would be," Ambrose scoffed.

Caspian scowled at him. "What I mean, is that we're probably going to die getting him out."

I hissed out a breath. "What?"

"It was hard to find his location. He's in some sort of magic dampening prison, so getting a lock on him damn near killed me." I glared at him. We were going to need to have a bigger discussion about that later. "But it's what's surrounding him that has me worried."

"Well," Thorne snapped, "out with it."

Caspian sucked in a deep breath and rubbed his hand down his face. "He's here. In Sahira. He's actually extremely close." My heart started racing at that. "But he's surrounded by...well...my guess is it's an army."

Oh, gods. I had a sinking feeling where this was going. My gaze locked with the others, and I could see that they were coming to the same conclusion I was.

“An army?” I asked.

Caspian nodded. “One made up of every species.”

Fuck.



Daimon

I COULD FEEL my bloodlust stir at Caspian’s proclamation. More enemies to slaughter in my mate’s name. If what Caspian said was true, Ashera was going to need more power to face her enemies and free Malachi. We were going to need to finalize the mate bond. With each mate she took, she was able to hold more power. The more power she was able to hold, the stronger she became.

I had to stop myself from laughing. Keres, by severing Jareth’s soul into several shards, had given Ashera the means to easily slaughter the entire population of Jahmal. I felt a surge of pride well within me. My mate would be unstoppable once she’d claimed all those that were hers. Gods typically only had two or three mates, it was nature’s way of ensuring that we didn’t get too powerful.

My eyes flicked over to Winta. How interesting. I’d felt Inara’s soul bound with Ashera’s centuries ago, but then I’d felt her die. If Ashera wasn’t bound to someone, I couldn’t feel them through the echo of the mate bond I still held within me. The moment she’d solidified the bond with the dragon shifter, I’d known. Inara was always meant to be Ashera’s too.

Everything was dropping into place. I hadn’t dared hope – in the five thousand years I’d been forced to remain alone by the Void – that we would get another chance at watching the ruling class of Jahmal burn. This time... Well, this time I’d make sure that we didn’t fail.

“Daimon?” I blinked. I hadn’t realized I’d gotten lost in my thoughts until my luscious mate was standing before me, calling my name.

“I know I said I would answer your questions, and I will.” My gaze searched hers. “But I need you to trust me when I say that we need to finalize the mate bond. It’ll make you stronger for what’s to come.”

Gods, I loved watching her mind work. She knew I was right, and could feel the pull to finish the bond with me. Yet, she wanted answers. Needed

them. I couldn't blame her. If I were in her places I would probably beat the answers out of whoever had them and wasn't giving them to me fast enough. I wanted to give her the answers she sought, but she needed to choose. Lose time by talking this out—risking me getting pulled back to the Void—which would delay rescuing Malachi. Finalize the mate bond right now and leave to go get Mal once dawn broke, and we were safe from another attack.

“Are you going to disappear again?” She finally asked.

“Honestly?” She nodded. “I have no fucking clue. So as much as I want to take my time, we'll need to be quick.”

Regret and rage at my situation burned through my veins. We would have had to make this quick even if I wasn't at risk of disappearing back to the Void. The sun was setting, and we needed to get back out there to protect the camp if another attack happened.

Her hands rose to frame my face as she pressed her heavenly body against mine. I could smell her arousal with my next inhale, and a growl rumbled out of my chest in response. My mate needed to be sated, and everything within me demanded that I sate her. Now.

“Make me your mate, Daimon,” Ashera whispered against my lips.

That was all the permission I needed. With a thought, I transported us to an empty tent. I didn't care whose it was so long as I could bury myself in my mate without the eyes of the others watching.

I devoured her mouth like a starved man. Fuck, I was a starved man. Five thousand years I'd waited to spark the mate bond with Ashera again. The majority of those years I'd spent assuming she would never come back to me. Yet, through some unknown twist of fate, here she was. Warm. Succulent. Alive.

It almost broke me.

My hands clamped down on her hips as I dragged her flush against my body, wanting her to feel how hard she made me. I knew we needed to make this fast, but I needed her to know that she was the only creature on this planet who could bring me to my knees. She was my goddess. I was her most devoted worshiper. I would happily prostrate myself before her, offering up all that I was. I lived to serve her every whim.

Gods, how I wished I could revel in every inch of her body. Soon. Soon, I would show her just how she owned me, body and soul.

In an instant, I had our clothes removed. I grabbed her behind her thighs, lifting her against me. Those lush, supple thighs wrapped around my waist in a vice grip. I closed my eyes for a moment to bask in the feel of her there. I would never take a single moment with her for granted again. I would memorize every feel, touch, sound, taste.

“Daimon.” The soft call of my name caused my eyes to snap open. I could get lost in her. “I’m here with you, Daimon.”

I pressed my forehead to hers, my soul seeking comfort in this moment between us. I couldn’t stay there, however. So I launched myself into action, lowering Ashera to the bed. I slid a hand to her pussy. I needed to make sure she was wet for me.

“Does the thought of my cock get you this soaked?” My lips lifted in a smirk at the feel of her dripping pussy against my fingers. “Do you want me to fill this pussy with my come?”

“Yes.” Her voice was breathy with need, causing my dick to twitch. “Please, Daimon.”

I pulled back slightly. “Get on your hands and knees, and hold the fuck on.”

Ashera did as she was told, scrambling to get into position, and spreading those thick thighs for me. I groaned at the sight before me. Her sweet pussy was glistening with her need, and I couldn’t stop myself from leaning in to lick her clean. The breathless moan that left my goddess had my hands fisting as I fought the need to just drive myself in her to the hilt.

I grabbed my cock in one hand, and leaned in to fist her hair in the other. “I’m not going to go slow.”

“I don’t need you to.” I let out a dark chuckle at how desperate she sounded.

While I wasn’t slow, I did try to be gentle. Ashera had only taken my cock that one time, and she would need to get used to me again. Especially since I planned to let my knot lock me into place when I came. Her other mates wouldn’t have a knot. That had been something the gods wanted to keep for themselves.

Ashera’s knuckles turned white where she gripped the edge of the bed, a needy whine leaving her lips when I pushed myself fully inside her. Holy fuck. She was so damn tight. I had to take several breaths before I felt like I could move without completely fucking her into oblivion. She wasn’t ready for that yet.

“Daimon.” I knew what she needed.

I pulled out until just the tip was teasing her entrance. Then I slapped her ass. The satisfying sound, and the jiggle of flesh didn’t compare to her clenching around the head of my cock with that sweet little pussy of hers.

“How bad do you want my come in this pussy?”

I didn’t give her a chance to answer. With a slap to the other side of her ass, I started to move my hips in fast, firm strokes. Ashera buried her face in the pillow, releasing high pitched moans with each thrust.

“Shh,” I soothed, not once breaking my pace. “I know you need me to flood your pussy with my come. I know you need me to lock myself inside you. You’re being such a good girl, taking my cock.”

“Please,” she begged. I doubted she even knew what she was asking for.

“One day,” –I pulled out, leaned down to bite her ass, and then shoved back in– “I’m going to knot you until you breed. I’ll come in you over and over again until there’s no way that you won’t be carrying my child.”

“Oh gods.” It sounded as though she was biting the pillow when she spoke.

“Now, I need you to be a good little toy, and come for me. Milk my cock and take my come, fucking all of it.” I reached around and flicked her clit. “Do it, Ashera.”

With a hitch to her breath, the walls of her pussy clamped down hard around my cock. She screamed my name to the heavens, flooding my dick with her release.

“Fuck yes,” I gritted out. “So fucking good.”

My fangs descended, and I leaned down to bite her neck, savoring the blood that rushed into my mouth. My jaws remained locked against her as I roared out my own pleasure. My knot swelled inside her as I came. Ashera let out a gasp of shock before she was screaming again. My hips continued to grind into her, encouraging her to come around my knot again and again.

“Daimon,” she cried. “It’s too much!”

I released her neck, and snarled, “No it fucking isn’t. You’ll take everything I have to give, Ashera. Every fucking thing. Just like the goddess you are.”

She whimpered, her hips rocking against mine as she continued to squeeze around me until I had nothing left to give, and my knot released. With a groan, Ashera collapsed beneath me. Not wanting to crush my mate, I rolled beside her, bringing her up against my chest.

The mate bond thrummed strong within me.

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JUDAH



I knew Malachi wanted to form an escape plan. He'd been attempting to engage me in conversation for a while now. I wasn't sure how long, time was meaningless down here. The guard had dropped off food twice more, but that didn't mean two days had passed.

I pulled at the ends of my knotted, dirty hair. Gods, I would kill for a bath. My hands ran along my face, and I winced at how long my beard had become. A shave, too. Frankly, if we did ever get out of here, I was afraid to look in a mirror.

Seventy-five years.

I'd been locked away for three-quarters of a century. How had I not realized?

I could feel as my mind began to fracture the more I thought about it. I was spiraling, my mind wildly churning. The sharp sting of my nails as they dug into my scalp pulled me from hyper-fixating on that issue. I couldn't break now. I wouldn't. Not when it seemed as though there was finally actual hope to cling to.

"Judah!" Malachi's sharp, whip-like tone had me flinching back. I hated that fucking reflex. While I'd never been the strongest physically, my magic had been incredibly powerful, and I'd rarely had anything to fear before being locked down here. "You need to get out of this slump."

"Or what?" I snapped back. "It's not like you can do anything."

"I swear to the gods," I heard the giant demon mumble as if to himself. "Why do I always have to deal with this shit?"

I opened my mouth to answer when light flooded our cells, the creaking of the door hinges signaling the arrival of several guards. I immediately shrunk back against the far wall and made myself as small as possible. My gaze darted to Malachi to find that he'd puffed himself out as much as possible. Idiot.

The guards, for whatever reason, hadn't bothered to try to beat him into submission yet. Most likely because he was a big, mean looking fucker. They needed to starve him out first. I mentally rolled my eyes. Good luck with that. While Malachi had been kind enough to share food with me, it didn't look like he was going to be weak enough for them to win any time soon.

"Chandra wants you both."

My stomach churned, my heart racing off like a damn rabbit. Fuck. This wasn't good. Chandra only ever let me out of my cell to torture me. I fought to keep my breathing even as panic started to close my windpipe. My hands, unbidden, started to claw at my throat as a result.

"Calm, Judah." Malachi's voice was so soft I doubted the guards heard.

I blinked over at him. He took a deep inhale and held it for a moment before releasing it. Without thought, I copied him. Why was he trying to help me? Why did he care? My mind, already warped by my lengthy imprisonment, had a hard time focusing on any one issue, which frustrated me to no end. I'd been a renowned scholar! I shouldn't feel as though my mind was slipping away, failing me at every turn.

The clank of the keys against my cell door rattled me out of my thoughts. I cursed at how easily distracted I was. When did I become this bad? If Malachi hadn't come along, would I have even noticed?

Something warm lit within me. Something hot that seemed to settle my tumultuous stomach and cease my shaking. I couldn't name it. I hadn't felt anything other than terror and defeat in so long that feeling anything else was shocking. Welcoming the feeling, I climbed to my feet before the guards could cross into my cell and grab me. I wasn't quite brave enough to posture the way the demon assassin was, but I lifted my chin and looked straight ahead.

"How adorable," one of the guards taunted. "His *majesty* seems to have discovered his backbone." They all laughed.

I caught Malachi, out of the corner of my eye, giving me a nod. Sucking in a deep breath, I curled my hands into fists by my side, willing that hot

feeling to remain burning. For some reason, I wanted the large male next to me to be proud. I wanted to earn his respect.

The loud clang of metal boots against stone made me realize that I'd been so lost in my thoughts again that I hadn't noticed we had been removed from our cells and were making our way out of the dungeon. I silently cursed myself. I needed to stop wandering and remain in the present. Focused.

The doors to the summer palace throne room swung open silently. My eyes, still stinging from the light flooding the room, greedily took everything in. I was rarely brought up to this room, usually Chandra preferred to torture me down in the dungeon. I suspected it was because she wanted to deny me the chance to see what had become of my kingdom and my people. If nothing else, she was excellent at psychological warfare.

"Come!" Chandra's voice boomed throughout the room, startling me enough that I jumped. She was standing in front of two jade thrones. I was surprised to see they still stood there. I was stunned that this entire room appeared to not have been touched. Everything was as I remembered it. My brother hadn't changed things here, though I was sure the same couldn't be said for the rest of the kingdom.

My gaze made its way back to Chandra. It was strange seeing her in the light like this. In the dark, dank dungeon, I had never been able to make out much of her features, only knowing that she was female by her voice. Given this opportunity, I studied her. She was responsible for so much mental and physical pain. That hot flashing emotion raged through me again as I stared at her. I wanted to memorize every aspect of her. If I ever got free, I was going to end her. Slowly.

Compared to the incubus next to me, Chandra was tiny. While I hadn't been able to replenish my magical supply in quite some time, I could tell that she was a witch based on the aura around her. That aura was off-tainted, somehow—and I couldn't figure out what was causing it. Her body was slight and lean. Her skin was a soft brown, with dark purple markings—the only visible indicator that she was a witch. She wore a long, black woolen tunic, and black leather pants and boots. Her staff, a tool many witches used to help channel their powers, was strapped to her back with a leather harness. Her eyes were a deep violet color, unique for someone from Sahira. Her hair was cropped close on either side of her head, but weaved into a long plait in the center that fell over her shoulder to her chest.

If I had encountered her before my capture, I would have thought she looked like a child playing at being a warrior. Perhaps it was my pride that landed me in the dungeons seventy-five years ago. I certainly wouldn't underestimate anyone ever again.

The elbow that slammed into my side had me collapsing to the floor on my hands and knees. I shook my head, looking around. What had I missed?

"Please try to pay attention." Chandra's voice was falsely pleasant, and oh so patronizing. I grit my teeth and climbed back to my feet. "Good. Let's begin."



Malachi

IF I WAS wrong about Judah, I was going to be so fucking pissed. Trying to keep this asshole alive and semi sane would drive me mad. The things I did for Ashera. When I got back to her, I was going to cover her in my come and fuck her until she couldn't walk for a fucking week.

I'd kept as much of my attention on Judah as possible while we were making our way to the throne room without making it obvious. I didn't want him to somehow get himself beaten to death by the guards. I had a suspicion that Chandra might engage in a little light torture to see what I knew. It was just a matter of what form of torture.

She could outright torture me, but that wouldn't fucking work. Though, if she thought that Judah and I had been talking, it was possible she thought that torturing me would get Judah to spill any secrets I'd confided in him. Alternatively, she could do the opposite. Maybe she wanted to torture us both at the same time just for fun. It was really the dealer's choice at this point.

I purposefully hadn't given Judah any important information, aside from telling him about his brother's death, for this very reason. The male beside me was broken, and he couldn't be trusted not to break further under additional pressure. Ashera had her work cut out for her with that one. Thankfully, she had help.

The commanding clack of Chandra's heels on the wooden floor echoed in the nearly empty room. She was a tiny thing, and I had no doubt she used

that fact to her advantage. How many opponents had underestimated her and wound up dead? Too bad for her, I wasn't about to fall into that trap. I didn't let my eyes leave her for a moment, watching her for her next move.

"I'm thrilled you two got to spend some time together," she said with a smirk. "It should make this next part much more...interesting."

I gritted my teeth together, already annoyed by her. I had places to be and a mate to protect. Whatever she was planning on doing, she could do it already and let me go back to plotting my escape. "Why am I here?" I spat out.

In a flash, Chandra had her staff out, pointed in my direction, and an agonizing pain was radiating through my body. "Agh....what...the...*fuck*?" I roared. It felt like a thousand blades were slicing through my flesh, turning and digging as they carved me up from the inside out. I pulled at the chains holding my wrists together, but it was no use fighting against the magic. I knew witches had power to inflict pain, but like this? What the hell had Chandra messed with?

Then the pain was gone, and I slumped to my hands and knees as I panted, glaring at Chandra. "What the fuck?"

She smirked and propped her staff up on the floor. The damn thing was nearly as tall as she was. "That'll teach you for speaking without being spoken to. Now, I have some questions, and I don't care who answers them. I'm sure you two have had lots of time to talk to each other. If I don't like your answers, well..." She trailed off, and I knew exactly where she was going. If she didn't like my answers, it would be back to the magical pain again for me. And probably the same for Judah.

Fuck. Judah. He had been down in the dungeons for so long he probably didn't have any magic left himself, and that was going to make him even more susceptible to the torture. I had to make sure I took the brunt of it, if we were both going to get out of here alive. I knew, deep in my bones, that Ashera needed the witch king. So I would make sure she got him.

Thankfully, Chandra picked up her staff again and pointed it in my direction. "Where is the true heir to Sahira?"

I cocked my head with a frown. "You mean the one I'm sharing a dungeon with?"

Next to me, Judah sucked in a breath, but if I could keep Chandra annoyed and focused on me, we had a better chance of surviving this. Chandra shook her head, and the magic blasted through me again. A

thousand bees were stinging me, a million ants were biting my skin. I had never felt pain like this before, and it took everything in me to stay focused and alert. I fought against my bonds, groaning, until all at once, the pain stopped.

I looked up to see Chandra with a less than pleasant smile on her pixie-like face. “Let’s try this again, shall we? Judah’s twin is missing, and has been missing since he visited Qamar. Where *you* and your merry band of misfits were last seen with him. Where is he now?”

Dead. He’s dead. I watched a god rip his heart out and eat it. It’s fine, because he was the world’s largest douche anyway. Somehow, I didn’t think any of these answers would go over well with Chandra, though. So instead I said, “I haven’t seen the prick.”

Again the pain came. This time though, I was prepared for it. I was prepared for the blades and the bees and the ants and the pain that felt like I was surely on the edge of death. When the pain finally let up, I slumped to the floor. “Maybe you’ll learn not to bull-shit me,” Chandra murmured. “Or maybe we’ll have to try this a different way.” I picked my head up to see her pointing her staff toward a terrified-looking Judah. “Where is your brother?”

He shook his head, holding his hands up. “I don’t know, I swear. I don’t know where he is.”

Chandra squinted, squeezing her staff a bit tighter, ready to release her magic on Judah. I couldn’t let that happen. “Why do you care so much about that fucking asshole anyway?”

It worked. She spun, flicking her staff toward me instead. The pain pierced me, and I fell forward. If it meant Judah was protected, if it meant Ashera was safe...I would take the pain again and again. Finally, it stopped. Chandra sighed. “It seems like neither of you are in the mood to play today, and I’m bored with your antics. Take them back to the dungeons, and don’t give them food for a week.” A small boot kicked my side, and I barely felt it through my exhaustion. “Maybe you’ll be more cooperative when you’re starving.”

Someone was dragging me backward, and if I wasn’t so completely spent, this might have been my opportunity to escape—flee from Chandra and her dungeon. Unfortunately, I had no energy left in me, and no mate nearby to refill my depleted sources. I felt my body slam against the damp

dungeon floor once more, and sighed as the coolness of the rock eased some of my pain.

“You didn’t have to do that,” Judah whispered from next to me, sounding angry, almost petulant.

I didn’t bother picking my head up, but I flopped over onto my back. The nice thing about being in the dark was that there was no light to hurt my eyes while I figured out how best to heal myself. “Yes, I did. If we both want to make it out of here alive, I had to. I’ve been in here less time than you, and I’ll be back on my feet quicker.”

“Well...thanks.” I was too tired to smirk at the forced gratitude. Maybe, just maybe, Judah wasn’t quite as broken as I had assumed.

“Don’t mention it.” Now I just needed to heal. I needed sexual energy to feed myself, but a dark dungeon wasn’t exactly the most erotic or inspiring place to jack off in. “I just need to get back to Ashera. My mate needs me. And I need her.”

Judah hummed quietly. “You must love her very much.”

I laughed, the sound hurting my aching ribs. “And then some. She is the most beautiful fucking thing I’ve ever seen. She has this hair, and it’s so blonde, it’s basically golden. And her skin, her fucking skin shines. And those legs....holy fuck.” I groaned thinking about Ashera’s curvy legs, and the way her flesh fit to my hand. My cock was hard as a rock between my legs, and I realized this might be my opportunity to heal. Maybe this could benefit both of us—healing me and giving Judah something to fight for—with a little bit of extra work. “Judah, do you know what I would do to her if she was here right now?”

“No, what?” I couldn’t be sure, but I was fairly certain that was a groan I just heard from his direction. The poor guy had been locked away for nearly a century with no one’s touch to soothe him but his own. I could give him a momentary dream. If I was right, I would be sharing Ashera with him soon, anyway. May as well start now.

“Fuck, I would sink to my knees in front of her, and lick her dripping pussy. Do you remember what a pussy tastes like, Judah? No matter if you do or don’t, because Ashera’s is something else altogether. I would hold on to her hips, and I would eat her out like it was my last fucking meal. Even when she was bucking and crying out above me, I would keep fucking her with my tongue.” I grabbed my cock, stroking it slowly while releasing my pheromones into the air. From the cell next to me, I could hear Judah’s

labored breathing and began feeding off both of our energies swirling around the room. “You could play with her too, while I was making her come on my tongue. You could touch her perfect breasts, twisting those pretty pink nipples until she screamed. Maybe you’d even suck on one of them, squeezing the other between your fingers.”

Judah was definitely getting off. Thank, fuck. I needed all the sexual energy I could get to recover, and Judah needed something to make him realize there was a life worth living for.

“And once she had screamed and come all over my tongue, once I had cleaned her up, licking up every last drop of her release, I would have her straddle you.” I groaned, fisting my cock a bit harder. My release wasn’t far off. “I would have her sink her perfect little pussy down on your cock, feeding off both of your moans.”

Judah wasn’t far from coming either, but I needed both of us to come. It wasn’t Ashera, but it would do. I never got enough like this, even with someone else, but this was better than nothing. I was the only one of us that could recharge down here. “And then what?” he panted. “What would you do next?”

“Once she was stretched with your cock, and you couldn’t wait a single second more, I would move in behind her and slip inside her ass. Have you ever shared a woman, Judah? Have you ever fucked a woman, knowing she was filled to the brim?” I was stroking hard now, edging myself. “Fuck, it’s such a thrill. You learn to move in tandem to fuck her hard, exactly the way she wants to be fucked. Ashera especially. Gods, she loves it rough.”

I was so fucking close, and Judah was moaning next to me. I was already starting to feel better as I pulled off the energy in the dank dungeon.

“Her pussy would tighten around you as she came, squeezing you like there was no tomorrow. And then we’d both fill her with our come. Holy fuck, I love watching my cum dripping out of her. It’s the sexiest thing I’ve ever seen.” I groaned, and just as my release took over I heard Judah cry out from the darkness beside me.

I lay on the floor in my dirty, dark cell, feeding from the sexual energy I had created and feeling myself growing stronger by the minute.

I’m coming for you, Ashera, I thought. I’m coming.

JACOBI



All of us had heard them mating in the tent, Ashera's screams filling the night sky as we all sat around pretending we weren't desperate to be the ones fucking her. We all sat around the fire as we waited for Ashera and Daimon to come back. We had assumed they were mates, that much was fairly certain from the point he had showed up in Masas and declared my love a goddess while eating a dead man's heart. Now, however, they were official, and I wasn't sure how having a god in our mate group would affect us. How it would affect the precarious dynamic we all had with one another. I wasn't sure I could take much more of one of them being a raging piece of flaming shit.

"We should go for Mal tomorrow at first light," Caspian suggested. "They won't realize we know where they are just yet, and we might have a bit of an advantage. Plus, if they attack tonight, hopefully they'll be a bit weaker in the morning. We can run shifts of our armies to make sure they're fully rested for the morning."

I nodded. "That's a good idea. When Ashera comes back we'll confirm with her, and go from there. The rest of the demon army should be here just before dawn."

Ashera and Daimon walked out hand in hand—completely nude—with Ashera smiling from ear to ear, so I couldn't help but smile back. My love was stunning when she was happy. Even now, in the midst of all this chaos, she had found a reason to smile. For that, I was thankful to have Daimon join our ranks.

Ambrose was the first to speak up. “So, uh, does this mean I can borrow your knitting needles?”

I didn’t know what I had been expecting the vampire to say, but it wasn’t that. I burst out laughing, but Daimon just glared at Ambrose. “Never touch my needles,” he huffed. “Besides, we have bigger problems to deal with. My goddess and I are finally mated, but I don’t know how long I’ll have here before I’m thrown back to the Void. Ashera needs to feed once more if we’re expecting to fend off the witches again in the night, and I’m not here to help.”

I don’t think any of us were about to protest Daimon’s request. I stood, making my way over to Ashera, still out of breath and slick with sweat from her time with the large psychopath. Gods, she made me crazy. I didn’t even care that I wasn’t the one who had made her come earlier; I just knew I needed to be the one to make her come now. I slipped my hand behind her neck, kissing her deeply, tasting everything she had to give me. She moaned into my mouth, and I couldn’t help but slip my hand down to her breast, squeezing it gently. I smiled against her lips, before turning back and addressing the rest of the group. “You heard Daimon. Our mate needs to feed.”

I flashed a wicked grin at my mate before turning to the others and gesturing for them to follow me. Their curiosity spiked as each one followed me a safe distance away. I didn’t want Ashera to hear what I had planned for her. When I turned to face the group, I realized someone was missing.

Daimon was gone. Again.



Thorne

ASHERA’S AROUSAL filled the air, and I was desperate for another taste of my kitten. It didn’t matter that we weren’t right next to her. She was permanently infused into all of my senses. Whatever Jacobi was planning, there was no way I was going to miss out. I wasn’t sure how I felt about a god fucking my mate, and I needed to make sure she remembered the claim I’d staked and everything I could make her feel. I didn’t mind sharing, but I

didn't want to be forgotten about either. So if Ashera needed to feed, I would make sure I was buried deep inside her feeding her all the sexual energy she needed.

"Ambrose and Winta," the two perked up a bit when Jacobi addressed them, "you will get all the armies except the demon one ready to depart." They deflated a bit at that, but nodded. I recognized the need to keep on top of everything. It was unfortunate that we couldn't all fuck our mate at once again. I craved that crazy tangle of limbs again.

"Thorne and Caspian?" My cock jerked at the sound of my name as the angel king turned to us. "You two go round up the demons and meet me just outside the camp."

What?

The fae prince and I looked at each other, both of us trying to determine what the fuck birdbrain here was up to. Caspian gave a slight shrug before heading off. I wasn't quite so willing to blindly obey.

"What have you got planned?" I demanded.

Jacobi crossed his large arms over his chest with a glare that screamed murder if I didn't listen to him. So much for the peaceful king of Malak. I wasn't about to budge, however. My tiger was still riding me hard to fuck my mate and fill her to the brim with my come. Rationally, I knew that getting Ashera pregnant wasn't wise right now, but that didn't matter to the feral animal I shared my soul with. The only way to get the fucker to calm down was to make sure that I worked my way into kitten's tight little pussy—any part of her body, really—as often as possible.

I just didn't feel the need to explain all of this to someone who wouldn't understand, and the only person who might understand was Winta. The others didn't have an animal gnawing away inside of them that only had a few interests. Eating, sleeping, fucking, and fighting. Those were the only things the beasts within us wanted. Now that I had a mate, my tiger was far more interested in fucking than anything else.

The angel king studied me with a tilt of his head. I typically didn't rock the boat with Ashera's other mates. I didn't feel the need. Demanding answers was a little out of character for me, at least when it came to dealing with Jacobi. I was sure he couldn't quite figure out what to make of my sudden defiance.

"Don't worry," Jacobi's low timbre was surprisingly soothing given his tense stance, "You'll be able to get that ribbed cock of yours into Ashera.

Now, go do what I asked you to.”

I bristled, my tiger growling low inside me. The look in Jacobi’s eyes hardened, and I knew that despite what he’d just said, if I pushed too hard I’d have to get the other troops ready just like Ambrose and Winta.

With that knowledge in mind, I gave a stiff nod of my head and went off to gather the demon army with Caspian. Jacobi had better have a good fucking reason for all of this.



Ashera

JACOBI MADE his way back to me, a sinister grin spread across his handsome face. A thrill worked its way down my spine to curl in my core. I rubbed my legs together to ease some of the tension there. It didn’t seem to matter that I’d just violently come all over Daimon’s knot. The thought of being filled by my other mates had me panting like an animal in heat.

“I’m going to need you to wear this, my love.” Jacobi held out a thin strip of cloth. “I can’t have your surprise ruined too soon.”

My heart tripped over itself in my chest, and I could feel Daimon’s come—mixed with my own—start to slide down my legs. The last time Jacobi had placed a blindfold over my eyes...My nipples pebbled and a shiver stole over my skin at the thought. I doubted he would do a repeat of that night, though I would have to ask him to later. Jacobi, after finally having his sexual awakening in my palace so long ago, seemed to love experimenting with various experiences.

I certainly wasn’t about to stop him. I loved seeing what his surprisingly filthy mind came up with.

With a nod of my head, Jacobi moved behind me to secure the blindfold over my eyes. He made sure it was tight enough that I couldn’t see out the edges, though the material was thin enough that I could still see the light from outside shining through. His fingers trailed down my neck, a mere whisper of a touch that had goosebumps bursting out over my skin and my breath hitching in my lungs.

A soft rustle of fabric told me that Jacobi had either shifted his weight, or had moved entirely. The anticipation that knowledge built within me had

my hands clenching at my side and my pussy screaming to be filled. I bit my lip to keep myself from speaking, wanting the thrill of the unknown to continue for as long as possible.

“I’m going to bind your hands as well, my love.” The puff of Jacobi’s hot breath as he spoke caressed my collarbone. He moved to stand in front of me. My nipples, already hard and aching for any touch he saw fit to give me, tingled and tightened more. “Hold out your hands.”

I obeyed without hesitation, my hands rising and coming together in front of me. My angel released a dark, delicious chuckle. I could feel how pleased he was with me. The knowledge had me panting slightly.

“You’re being such a good girl,” he praised as he bound my hands. “If you continue to do so, you’ll be rewarded. Do you understand?”

Too turned on to speak, I nodded my head. The material around my wrists felt like standard rope, though he’d tied it tight and up to the middle of my forearm.

“I love how this makes your tits push up for me,” Jacobi murmured. His voice was filled with a dark hunger that had my pussy clenching. The brush of his calloused fingers against my nipples caused me to sway on my feet, a soft whimper escaping my lips. “Shh, my love. I’m going to take such good care of you.”

Gods.

His hands left my body, leaving me feeling so empty. My entire being now seemed to cry out for his touch. Not knowing when it would come again was an exquisite form of torture. One I loved and hated in turns. Being without my sight heightened my body’s responsiveness. Those precious, scorching points of contact were all I could focus on.

When my legs were snatched up from under me, my dark world tilting as Jacobi gathered me in his arms, I let out a squeak of surprise. Though the desire to ask where we were going coursed through me, that thrill of the unknown still had me wrapped tightly in its grasp. I was placed down on my feet again all too soon. I strained my ears in an attempt to determine where we were as the heat of Jacobi’s muscular body faded with his departure.

I knew we were still outside, but where exactly was a mystery. The soft murmur of familiar voices had my skin tingling with the desire to be touched. I stood alone for a few moments before the rustling of fabric told me one of my mates had come close once again.

“My love,” Jacobi’s timbre was still laced with need. I didn’t think I’d ever really truly appreciated his voice before now. I wanted him to blindfold me and tell me all the filthy things he wanted to try more often. “I’m not going to take the blindfold off just yet, but I need to tell you what my plan is. You need to consent.”

Right now, I didn’t care what he wanted to do to me just so long as he touched me. He could touch my arm with only a single finger and I’d give him anything he asked. I just needed to be touch.

“Do you remember when I made you scream my name to all of Masas?” my angel asked? I immediately nodded. His breath against my ear sent a delicious curl down to my toes. Gods, I was so wet as the memory flashed in my mind. “I’m going to fuck you in front of your army.”

I stilled. He just... Did he...?

I sputtered, unable to find any words through my shock.

“Think of how you’ll be able to feast off their energy,” he coaxed. Not that I needed coaxing. I’d meant it when I thought I would consent to anything just to get him to touch me. I was just surprised that Jacobi—pure angel king of Malak—suggested fucking me in front of my army.

The rational part of me could see the benefits of this as well. Not only would I be able to feed off the energy the army put out, but they would be able to feed themselves as well. It was brilliant. Thank the gods demons didn’t have any hangups about being seen naked or while having sex. In fact, large public orgies were the norm in Shaytan.

“My love.” Jacobi trailed his fingers over my shoulder, and I shivered at the touch. “Do you consent?”

I swallowed. “Yes.” I made sure my voice was firm and sure. I didn’t want Jacobi to later question whether or not this was something I wanted. “Gods, yes.”

Another warm body pressed up against my back—the low purr told me it was Thorne—strong muscular arms wrapping around me to grasp my bound hands. As they were lifted above my head and secured, forcing me up onto my tiptoes, Jacobi lightly trailed his tongue down my neck before nipping at my collarbone. My chest arched as though it had a mind of its own. In this position, unable to touch, unable to see, I was forced to simply feel and revel in the sensations Jacobi and Thorne could wrest from my body.

“Go ahead, Caspian,” Jacobi quietly murmured.

Caspian? He was in on this, too?

I groaned. My pussy was throbbing, and I tried to shift my legs to ease the ache. The way my mates had secured me prevented me from providing myself with any significant friction. Waiting to have one of them touch me had my every nerve ending standing at attention. My light pants sounded too loud to my ears.

Firm, warm hands slid along my ankles. I whimpered at the touch. It wasn't nearly what I needed, but it still felt so good. When they reached my knees, my legs were lifted and placed on strong, wide shoulders. My toes curled as warmth soaked into my skin at every point of contact.

"Fuck," Caspian swore in a whisper. "She is so fucking wet. She's dripping down her legs." Jacobi and Thorne released dark chuckles. "One of you should brace her for this. I want to make sure there's no way this soaked pussy is getting away from me."

Thorne—I could tell by the purr—braced my back against his chest, more heat sinking into me. Caspian's hands tightly gripped my hips while Thorne's hands came up to cup my breasts. His nimble fingers started pinching and tweaking my tight, aching nipples.

"Yes," I hissed.

A warm, wet tongue began lapping at my inner thigh. My fae prince released a low groan the closer to my core that he got. "I might not mind the god if he makes you taste even better than you usually do."

"Wha—?"

"Don't think, kitten," Thorne growled. "Feel."

Before I could respond, Caspian's mouth closed around my clit, a strong suck had my head falling back against Thorne's shoulder. My thighs clenched around Caspian's head, refusing to let my mate pull away.

"Feed." Jacobi's commanding tone left no room for argument, I ground against Caspian's face as a result. "Now."

The sexual energy in the air was far more potent than I'd ever felt. Clearly, there was something to this act of exhibitionism. Something I should have tried before now. I had a moment to marvel at how much I was able to pull into me, far more than normal, before Caspian was feasting on me like I was his last meal.

Emboldened by the energy still surging through the air, I released long loud moans as my fae's tongue brought me closer and closer to my orgasm. Thorne's fingers continued their teasing strokes, the sensations creating a

feedback loop within my body that had me chanting their names to the heavens.

Fingers firmly grasped my chin, turning my head. I knew the feel of Jacobi's hands all too well. I smiled despite not being able to see him. His lips met mine, a soft brush at first, before he devoured me with the same intensity Caspian ate my pussy.

"Are you going to be a good girl and come for your mates, kitten?" Thorne whispered in my ear. He leaned in and nipped the lobe. "Your army wants to see how fierce their queen is while she takes her pleasure."

I whimpered into Jacobi's mouth in response.

Two long, thick fingers slid into my core, crooking at the perfect angle to have my legs shaking and my toes curling. I was so close.

"Is your pussy clamping down on Caspian's fingers?" Thorne nipped at my neck now. "I bet you wish it was his cock, don't you, kitten? Do you think you could take two cocks in that tight cunt at the same time?"

Just the idea of having two of them slide their thick cocks into my pussy at the same time had me screaming into Jacobi's mouth as I came. Caspian moaned as he lapped up my release, his fingers continuing to rub against my g-spot to prolong my orgasm. My legs shook violently, and my breathing was heaving in and out of my chest as I struggled to breathe.

"I think she likes the idea of double penetration." Jacobi chuckled as he pulled away from my mouth. "You'll get two cocks stuffed into you, my love. Caspian and Thorne are going to fuck that delicious cunt of yours while I fuck your face."

"Gods, yes." I panted, completely onboard with letting them do anything they wanted with my body. I just wanted them to make me come over and over again. I wanted to continue to feast on the energy that saturated the air.

My hands were removed from above my head, and released of their bindings. Then, my blindfold came off. I cast a cursory glance over at my army, many of whom were engaged amongst themselves or masturbating, but quickly returned my focus back to my mates. They were all deliciously naked.

Caspian threw himself onto his back on the ground, a broad grin stretching his incredibly handsome face. His chin glistened with the remnants of my release he'd failed to catch. My pussy clenched and my nipples tingled at the sight. It was as though my body had staked a claim on

my mate, and I loved seeing evidence of that on him—aside from the mate mark, of course. The more I could mark my mates, let the world know they were mine, the better.

“Mount Caspian,” Jacobi ordered. That voice, the one he only used during moments like this, had my body quivering in anticipation. He sounded so sure, confident, demanding. I loved it. I needed more of it. More of him. More of all of them.

While I was usually one to push my mates to earn my obedience, I was more concerned with the promise of pleasure that lay ahead of me. They presented me with something I hadn’t known I wanted, and I planned to dive headlong into this experience.

The sexual energy I’d been feeding off of thus far left me feeling drunk on power. Yet, somehow, I knew that I could still take more. Why shouldn’t I deny myself that power?

I wouldn’t. I would take all I could without remorse. After all, I was a fucking goddess.

Placing my legs on either side of my fae prince, I sank to my knees and held myself above him. Thorne was immediately moving against my back, his hand fisting tightly in my hair. A furry appendage wound its way around my throat, giving a gentle squeeze that had my eyes fluttering. I was tempted to demand that he use his tail every time he fucked me.

“Sink that sweet cunt down onto Caspian’s cock, kitten,” Thorne growled in my ear. I shivered, but did as he asked.

Jacobi came to kneel above Caspian, but my tiger wouldn’t allow me to bend forward to take him into my mouth. The hand in my hair didn’t allow me to turn and scowl at him either. I wanted all of them inside me. Now.

“Patience, my love,” Jacobi soothed. “Once Thorne and Caspian are buried deep in your pussy, then I’ll stuff your mouth with my cock. You’ll get what you need. Don’t worry.”

I huffed out a breath before nodding as much as I could. “Yes, sir.”

My words had the desired effect. Jacobi released a low snarl, his eyes narrowing with heated intent. Just because I wasn’t about to make them earn my submission didn’t mean I wouldn’t push them to do what I wanted. It seemed that while Jacobi knew what I was about, he wouldn’t give in to me...yet.

Thorne chuckled, the puff of his breath heating my shoulder. “Nice try, kitten.”

I sent Jacobi a flirty pout before starting to lower myself over Caspian's cock. The feel of him as he stretched me had my breath hitching in delight. Feeding off this immense power while sinking down onto one of my mates' cocks was such a mind blowing experience. Feeding usually heightened my pleasure, but this...

This was so much more.

Once I was seated fully on the fae beneath me, Thorne pushed me forward so my hands slapped down on either side of Caspian's head. A thick finger ran along my entrance, spreading me and making me pant.

"Just breathe, my love," Jacobi encouraged. "You were made to take us."

I allowed my gaze to drift up his body before locking with his. That wicked smirk was back on his face as he leaned down to trace my lips with his thumb.

I was so distracted by what he was doing—the heated look on his face, I almost didn't realize that Thorne was starting to work his way into my pussy. But the feeling of his ribbed cock moving in shallow thrusts while Caspian remained perfectly still beneath me had me moaning.

When my lips parted, Jacobi slid his thumb into my mouth, and I reflexively closed my lips to suck on the digit.

Thorne pushed in more, seating himself to the hilt and then pausing to allow me to adjust.

Gods, I felt so fucking full. More so than when I'd had Daimon inside me earlier. I panted out of my nose, refusing to release Jacobi's thumb. It felt so fucking good. But I needed more. So much more.

Swirling my tongue around the digit in my mouth, I then released it before demanding, "Give me your cock."

Thorne released my hair, his hands landing on my hips instead. One of Caspian's hands closed around a nipple while the other started to torment my clit. Jacobi's hands buried themselves in my long locks as he lined the head of his cock up with my mouth.

"None of us are going to go easy on you. You're our cum slut, our little toy to take our pleasure from. You're going to take everything we give you, how we give it to you, and you're going to fucking love it." Jacobi's eyes, so heated, held such promise in them that I clenched around the others without thought. "Do you understand, toy?"

"Yes," I breathed out. "Please."

“Please, what?” He demanded.

“Please, sir.”

“Good girl.”

With that, Jacobi shoved his cock down my throat at the same time that Thorne and Caspian started moving inside me. Caspian kept up his ministrations against my clit while Thorne alternated between my nipples, his tail tightening and releasing at random. I swallowed around Jacobi’s cock each time he thrust deep, causing the angel to curse and moan.

I was so absorbed with what was happening, I didn’t hear anyone else approach until Jacobi released a dark chuckle.

“Couldn’t stay away, could you?” he asked.

“Fuck no, birdbrain.” Ambrose.

“We could scent her from across the camp.” Winta.

All of the mates present at the camp were here. I moaned around Jacobi and clenched down hard on Thorne and Caspian, all three of them groaning in pleasure.

I wanted all of them. Though, I wasn’t sure how that would work, and my brain couldn’t seem to hold two thoughts together long enough to figure it out.

“I think I’m going to get some payback,” Ambrose growled.

Payback?

Suddenly, Thorne was bent over my back, his hips pushed forcefully against mine as he released a grunt.

“Fuck.” Thorne snarled, but didn’t turn to swipe at the vampire.

Caspian continued to thrust inside of me, while Thorne remained still for a moment. Then his hips started to thrust at a fast, punishing pace. I saw stars.

I was pretty sure I blacked out when I felt something warm and covered in scales—coated in lube—start to probe at my ass. Oh gods. Ambrose, was fucking me through Thorne, and Winta was about to fuck my ass with her tail.

So much. So good.

Winta eased in slowly, taking her time despite the frantic pace of the males in my pussy, and the steady thrusting of the male in my mouth. She was gentle where the others were rough. It was a heady combination, overwhelming me to the point of madness.

I was almost full enough that I could stop feeding, but I didn't want to. I wanted the heightened sensations to continue. I wanted to lose myself completely in them. I wanted to become pleasure.

"Soak those dicks with your release, toy." Jacobi's demand had my eyes snapping open. I hadn't realized that I'd closed them. "Do it. Now."

Caspian pinched my clit and my nipple. Thorne leaned in to bite the side of my neck, squeezing my throat with his tail.

I must have passed out, because the next thing I knew, my entire body was shaking, and my mates were all finding their own pleasure. The three inside me filled me to bursting. I tried to swallow as much of Jacobi's release as I could, but some dribbled out the side of my mouth.

The army seemed to release as well, collectively letting out a roar as the energy around us peaked. The last thought to flit through my mind before darkness claimed me, was that I'd never felt more powerful in my life. It was good being a goddess.



I WOKE to the early morning sunlight streaming in through the tent's canvas, surrounded by Winta and Jacobi. It was too quiet. Too still. Alarm skittered down my spine, and my breathing picked up. What the fuck? Ambrose was supposed to wake me for the second watch. I flew out of bed and scrambled to get dressed, rushing to the door of the tent. It would be just like them to fight an entire battle while I slept in an attempt to keep me safe.

"Precious?" Winta murmured, her voice husky with sleep. "What's wrong?"

I didn't reply, storming out to the camp. My anxiety gave rise to anger, and I could feel the flush that covered my body with the hot emotion. "Ambrose? Cas? Thorne?"

"Over here, kitten!" Thorne called. I followed the sound of his voice to where the rest of my mates, minus Malachi and Daimon, sat around the fire. He smiled at me as I approached, seemingly no worse for the wear but entirely clueless about the fury that was bubbling in my veins. "How'd you sleep?"

"I slept fine," I snapped, realizing how silly it sounded to be angry about sleeping well, but I was already too far gone to care. "You were

supposed to wake me up for second watch. One of you was supposed to wake me up.”

Caspian shrugged. “You needed the sleep, and we were awake, so we figured we’d let you sleep, and we’d just stay up.”

“And when the witches came?” I fumed. “You decided to just take care of that on your own too? How many men did we lose while you let me sleep?”

“Little queen,” Ambrose soothed, getting to his feet and running his hands over my shoulders. “Easy, little queen.”

“Don’t tell me to take it easy! We’re in the middle of a war, and I can’t be sleeping—”

“The witches didn’t attack,” Ambrose interrupted.

I froze. “What did you say?”

“The witches didn’t attack.” He brushed my loose hair away from my face, his red eyes a soft maroon this morning. He was surprisingly relaxed. “We kept waiting for them all night, and had different troops stationed all around the camp, but they never showed.”

“Well, I...” I trailed off, still annoyed, but grateful the witches hadn’t attacked. “You still should’ve woke me. You needed your sleep too.” I huffed, crossing my arms.

“We’re fine, kitten.” Thorne grinned at me over Ambrose, flexing his massive arm my way. “Personally, I’ve never felt better.”

I rolled my eyes. These men were going to be the death of me. “I’m going to get dressed, and then we’re going to get Mal back.”

I turned and stalked back off to the tent to wake up Jacobi and Winta, but Caspian caught up to me, wrapping his arm around me. “Good morning, dick slayer.”

“You’re in a good mood this morning,” I griped. Just because he smiled at me and said good morning didn’t mean I was going to forget they had ignored what I said last night about waking me up.

“Not dying will do that for you.” He grinned, and then his smile fell as he spun me around to face him just outside of the tent. “Dick slayer, I wanted to give you the option. What we’re going into today isn’t just dangerous—it’s deadly. We need to be in the right frame of mind to get Malachi back. If you think you’ll be too emotional with him on the line, I understand if you feel the need to stay back. No one will think less of you for it.”

I understood what he was saying. We couldn't afford to slip up with the multispecies army. We had to be absolutely perfect if we were going to get Malachi and get out alive, but I couldn't stay back. Not when my mates' lives were on the line, and I had the power to make a difference in a battle. "No. I'm coming. That's final, Cas."

He nodded. "I understand."

"Thank you though." I hesitated. "Are you sure you feel well enough to go with us? You only just got over draining your magic and I would hate..."

Caspian held up his hand. "I'm fine. Really, dick slayer, I'm good. And you need me there anyway, this place is going to be a bitch to find."

"Okay." I smiled up at him, pulling his head down so I could rest my forehead against his. "Then let's do this."

It didn't take long to get Winta and Jacobi ready. Daimon was nowhere to be found, but he had said that might be the case. Hopefully he would pop up again soon. He needed to tell me more about all of my capabilities as a goddess, and while knowing before we went into this would've helped, I'd accept knowing at any point. Not to mention, now that I had all this power thrumming at my fingertips, I wasn't sure how that could impact the abilities I had already displayed. The way I'd fed yesterday...I felt like I could sink all of Dunya into the sea with a thought.

We stood together, prepared for anything, and ready for nothing. The only thing that was certain was that we were getting Malachi back – together.

WINTA



I hadn't fully shifted into my dragon for what felt like years, and it felt good to be back in her scales. We had decided last night that Thorne and I would go into the compound shifted, along with the rest of our shifter army. We wouldn't have time to transform once we were there, so it was better to do it now. I flapped my wings, soaring above the army. Thorne was at the front, Ashera flying low with Caspian in her arms just behind him. Jacobi, as seemed to be the norm, was carrying a grumpy looking Ambrose. If I had to guess, I don't think he enjoyed not having wings.

The energy flooding down the mate bond was tense, and it made me nervous. We needed to get Malachi back for all of our sakes, but what if this failed? No. I couldn't afford to think like that. While it was always wise to have several strategies, including one for failure, continuing to dwell on the thought would only bring that failure to fruition. We were going into this as ready as we could be.

I just wished that we had more information, but that would be next to impossible given the small amount of information Daimon had given us about the witches' multi-species army. If we attempted to send someone to spy on the army, the chances were high that they would get caught and controlled by the witches. A sudden, full-frontal assault was the best option.

Daimon—when explaining about this outlawed practice—had made it seem like it wasn't something that could be done quickly, so we had to hope that none of our forces would get taken over by the witches during the attack. If we kept them busy enough, not only could we release those under

their control, but we should be able to prevent anyone else from falling victim. In theory...

Despite my reservations about the god, I sincerely hoped that he showed up again to help us out. He made it seem as though he would immediately attempt to get back to Ashera if he disappeared, but hadn't seemed too certain he would be able to. Hopefully, the power that Ashera had gained from feeding off the demon army would be enough to keep the odds in our favor.

Our armies marched behind Thorne, ready for anything. I hoped. We marched for a couple hours, my anxiety racing higher and higher the closer we got. Caspian led us around the city walls, to a desert that appeared to be absolutely desolate. Nothing lived here. Nothing could live here.

But no, rising up from one of the dunes was a large compound. It was built from what appeared to be clay, so at odds with the materials used to construct the capital city. Given its relatively close proximity to the capital city, I wondered if this had originally been intended as some sort of refuge should the witches ever need it against an invading force. Qamar had one of those, and there were underground tunnels that connected the city to the compound. But the compound didn't hold my attention for long. It was what encompassed the compound that drew my gaze. Even from this distance, I could see the massive army surrounding it.

From the shout that rose into the air, they knew we were coming.

I flew ahead, wanting to take out as many of them as I could before they could reach us. I let my fire bubble in my chest, expelling it out on as many of the enemy as I possibly could. Below me, the multispecies army was roaring and screaming, running for us as fast as they could. Unfortunately, it was like trying to stomp on a colony of ants. While I could get a good number of them, there were so many that there was no way I would be able to get them all before our armies clashed.

Somewhere behind me I heard Caspian call out. "Remember to just carve a path. We need to get through and get to Malachi. The army can handle themselves."

I looked down, watching the two armies collide and begin to battle. Shouts rang out as each side rallied. The clang of steel against steel soon overwhelmed everything else, along with the tangly, metallic scent of blood. I could at least help cut a path to the compound. It would be up to

the army to maintain that path long enough to get the others in. I let my fire build again, and let my dragon take over.

She would know what to do.



Ashera

IT WAS CHAOTIC—THE cacophony nearly deafening— and I didn't know where to look. I'd been in plenty of battles prior to this, but the sheer number of bodies around me was new. I landed and started fighting my way through the multispecies army, but there were so many of them it felt like a never-ending sea. I couldn't open any cracks in the earth because we were all battling mixed up with one another, and I couldn't afford to hurt any of my people, or my mates. So I'd have to do this the old fashioned way. Luckily, I wasn't too bad at the old fashioned way.

I whipped both blades out from behind my back, and dove into the fray. Every so often, one of my mates would pop up as they pushed forward with our army, all of us desperately trying to get through the forest of bodies to get to the compound where Malachi was being held. While my mates would often break away, we kept close to one another in an attempt to cleave as direct a line as possible through the battle. Winta, flying overhead and releasing stream after stream of fire, was attempting to aid us.

What if we didn't make it, and we fell on the battlefield? I shook my head, unwilling to let that thought take root. If I allowed myself to fall into that train of thought, I wouldn't be able to focus on the battle around me and getting into the compound.

Gods. I hoped Mal was okay. Right now, I needed to keep my attention on the battle at hand. Thorne's tiger appeared, ripping the head off a dull colored witch. Dramatic, but effective. To my right, Caspian was creating whips out of the sand, wrapping witches and their mindless soldiers in his makeshift bindings. Up ahead, Ambrose was slaughtering anyone who came near him. I turned to my side and sliced through an enemy shifter that had gotten too close. Ambrose was stabbing through a witch's neck, but he didn't see the second witch that was sneaking up behind him.

"Ambrose!" I screamed. "Ambrose! Your back!"

But I was too late, and there was no way he would be able to avoid it in time. There was no way for me to get to him, and even if I could, there was no guarantee I wouldn't hurt Ambrose as well. Out of nowhere, Daimon appeared behind Ambrose. *Thank fuck.* His arms snapped out faster than I could follow, twisting the witch's neck until it snapped, and they dropped limply to the dirt. Ambrose finally turned around and smiled at Daimon. I didn't even mind the way he looked at the god right now; he was safe and that was all that mattered. I couldn't hear what he said over the battle, but I had to assume it was something along the lines of "cool trick."

I pushed through another few witches, dropping them to the ground. The gates were just up ahead, and we were almost there. I sent a quick pulse of power down the mate bond to make sure everyone was okay, and I got a quiet thrum back from everyone except Winta, who still flew overhead in her dragon form. Somehow, we had almost made it through the massive multispecies army.

Thanks to the feeding from yesterday, I wasn't flagging at all. I was also attempting to cut enemies down with my blades and not use my magic, unsure of what we would encounter once we were able to breach the compound. Despite all the physical fighting I'd been doing thus far, I still felt wired and flush with power. Was this how Daimon felt all the time? If so, I sure as fuck hoped I got to be like this more often.

I glanced around to ensure that my mates, all but Winta, were close enough to penetrate the gates now that we'd made it through. All of us were covered in blood, even Daimon who had only just appeared was completely drenched. The male worked fast. Thankfully, none of them were too far off, and should be able to easily get to me. Our armies would continue to slaughter as many as they could, keeping the gates clear and hopefully buying us enough time to get in, get Malachi, and get out.

"The gates!" I yelled. "Get to the gates!"

The gates were wide open and had allowed the enemy army to swarm out, but it also now allowed us to race inside. Based on the sheer size of the compound, I knew that Caspian was right—I was going to need his help to find my missing mate. I needed to have faith that our army could handle the battle while we were inside finding Mal. I pushed past the last wave of the army, and found myself in open air once more.

I raced past the gates, whipping my arm out to take down a lone demon guard who had remained behind, and waited with my blades drawn for my

other mates. I stood inside a small courtyard, barren of any enemies since I had taken down the only guard. The same probably couldn't be said for inside, but for now, I was okay. Daimon was the first to appear, massive and pissy – probably because he had been pulled away from me again pre-orgy. I would've been pissed about that myself. Winta landed in the small courtyard, and shifted back to her human form.

"Precious," she called. "I'm so glad you're okay!"

I ran to her, and threw my arms around her. "I'm okay. But I need Malachi. I'm ready to go find him."

"And we will find him," Caspian said, coming up behind me. He was sweaty and pale, but otherwise unharmed. I was so glad he hadn't fainted in the fray, I had been worried about him not being at 100%.

Jacobi flew over the courtyard gates at the same time Thorne and Ambrose raced through them. How Ambrose was the last to arrive when he had been ahead of me beat me, but if I knew Ambrose, he was probably having too much fun taking out the enemy.

Thorne shifted into his human form and sauntered up to me with a shit-eating grin, giving me a massive kiss. "That was fun. Can we do that again?"

"Absolutely not," I muttered. "We need to go get Mal. Now."

"What are we waiting for?" Ambrose asked. "Let's go get bat fuck."

We stormed into the compound together. There were a lot fewer guards than I had expected, and we easily took them out as we made our way to the center where Caspian had felt Mal's energy. We burst through the main doors, leading us into a throne room. At the front of the room stood two jade thrones, and on one of the thrones sat a petite woman.

She leapt to her feet, wielding her massive staff in our direction, but before she could do anything, Daimon had his massive forearm pinning her to the wall. I strode up to the small woman, wondering how someone so tiny could do so much damage to my heart. She better hope Mal was alive. If he wasn't, I was going to have fun ripping her to shreds.

"Where is Malachi?" I demanded.

She sneered. "Haven't heard of him."

Daimon's arm pressed harder against her neck, and her face paled. "Dungeon," she croaked out.

I turned to follow her gaze, seeing a hallway that led to an old set of stairs, and without waiting for anyone, I ran to them. My heart was

pounding inside my chest, drowning out any surrounding noise. My mate was here. He was so close, and I couldn't wait another second.



Malachi

I LAY ON MY BACK, staring up into the blackness. I felt better now that I had fed, but I was at a loss on how to get the fuck out of here—with Judah. Next time they pulled us out, I would be ready, but when would that be? Ashera needed me now. Despite my urgency, I couldn't just leave the witch king here. Ashera was going to need him, too. I needed to figure out a way to get us both out safely.

The door to the dungeon flew open, flooding our cells with light. I winced at the sudden intrusion, but I sat up. Next to me, Judah blinked against the blinding light, and I shielded my eyes to see how many guards were at the door. Except there wasn't a guard. There was one petite, curvy woman backlit by the daylight. I knew that figure. I knew that smell.

Ashera.

"Sher? Holy fuck, how are you here?" I breathed. Holy shit. Was this happening, or had I spent too much time in the dungeon and had lost my mind? Either was an option at this point.

"Is this your mate?" Judah asked. Not a hallucination. He saw her too. She was really here.

I ran to the rails, wrapping my hands around them, and Ashera sprinted across the room toward me. "Malachi! Oh gods, Mal, you're okay. I was so worried." She knelt across from me, only these stupid bars keeping me from her. She tugged at them, but I shook my head.

"They're spelled, Sher. Even he can't get out." I tipped my head toward Judah, who was sitting, watching the entire thing with a curious look on his face.

"He?" She questioned, her attention slow to leave me and turn toward the witch king.

I smiled, coughing out a laugh. "Sher, I'd like to introduce you to King Judah of Sahira."

Her head snapped back in my direction. I watched her mind process what I had told her, her perfect mouth dropping open. “I’m sorry, what did you say?”

“Ashera, Judah. Judah, Ashera.”

She looked over to Judah in shock, and as soon as their gazes met, something flashed between them. *Another one*, I thought. I wasn’t surprised. In fact, I had assumed this would happen. My theory—now proven correct—had been that Ashera would take a mate from each of the kingdoms. I planned to ask Daimon why later. Honestly, it could’ve been a lot worse than Judah. The man needed some socialization skills, but all in all he was a good guy.

“We’ve been looking for you,” she breathed. “How long have you been down here?”

He got to his feet, doing his best to look dignified. Somehow he managed, even in the dimly-lit cell, his face dirty, and his clothes a mess. I waited to see what he would say, and how it would be taken. There was a highly probable chance it was going to be a complete disaster. “It’s a pleasure to meet you, Queen Ashera. I’ve heard so much about you.” Oh, so now Judah was the fucking king of manners? Made perfect fucking sense. Douche. He looked over to me, a sad look passing over his face. “According to Malachi, I’ve been down here for seventy-five years.”

My heart hurt for the guy. He had been down here for so long, missing out on so much of life. Going back to the real world was going to be hard for him, but if I was right about that look that had passed between him and Ashera, he would have us to help him navigate it. Things had definitely changed since he had last been a free man.

The light from the door darkened briefly, and there stood Caspian and Daimon. I had never been so happy to see those fuckers in my life.

Ashera shook her head at Judah, still in disbelief, and then turned to the men in the doorway. “The bars are spelled. Do you think you can open them?”

Judah looked to me as if to say, *they don’t really think they can open these do they?* But Daimon only laughed and stepped up to the bars. I wasn’t about to ruin the surprise for him. I was positive that Daimon—a god—would be able to break us out of here.

“Witches have always thought they could outsmart us. But we’re the ones who gave them their power. We can just as easily take it away.” He

gripped two of the bars on Judah's cell, and without breaking a sweat, wrenched them apart.

"Holy shit," Judah muttered. "Am I seeing things? I know my mental capabilities have been a bit off, but this..." I fought the urge to laugh as he trailed off.

Daimon grinned, standing in front of my cell to rip open my bars as well. "You're not seeing things, Judah. Daimon here, is a god." I smiled at him, stepping cautiously out into the dungeon, finally free of my prison. Fuck, it felt good. I wanted to run up and see the sun, and take a deep breath of fresh air, but I had more important things to do first.

I strode over to Ashera, wrapping her in my arms, and kissing her hard. "I love you so godsdamn much," I murmured. "I'm never leaving your side again. Not in a thousand years."

She pulled back, smirking at me with tears in her eyes. "You better not. Because if you leave again, I'll kick your godsdamn ass, Malachi."



Daimon

I WRAPPED Mal's arm around my shoulders, Caspian took King Judah, and together we made our way back up to the throne room. I had so much to explain to everyone – but there was never enough godsdamn time. I never knew when I was going to get pulled back to the Void, and that shit was getting old really fast. By the time we had made it upstairs, Mal and Judah both seemed remarkably brighter. It was clear they were still weak, but there was a lightness about them that told me they would recover quickly.

In the throne room, Winta and Thorne had Chandra bound; Ambrose had her staff–looking like he wanted to beat her over the head with it, and Jacobi was trying to talk him down. The usual antics then. I was half tempted to egg the vampire on. I loved a good bludgeoning.

Ambrose saw us coming, a broad grin stretching across his face. "Bat fuck! You're still alive!"

Mal laughed, dropping his arm from my shoulder to go embrace the vampire. "They didn't try hard enough to kill me."

Judah, though, was distracted by Chandra, a look of pure death crossing his face. “You...” he muttered. “You ruined everything.”

He stalked over to her, his magic barely glowing around him as weak as he was. Chandra paled and pulled at her bindings, but Winta kept tight to them. Just as he reached her, he collapsed to the floor, his body too weak to sustain any form of magic for too long. Ashera ran to him, helping him up. “You need to rest, Judah. You can do whatever you want to her after, but for now, we need to get you somewhere you can recover.”

Judah bared his teeth at Chandra, looking like he wanted to rip her apart with his bare hands, but Jacobi was already there, helping him to his feet. “I checked on the battle outside, and our army has declared victory over the witch army, so we’ll be safe here for however long we need. I’ll get him somewhere comfortable,” he said. “I’ll watch over him until he’s had some rest, and then maybe try and find some food for him.”

Ashera smiled up at the angel. “Great idea. You take Judah. Winta, and Thorne, can you handle Chandra and any other witches the army might have held onto? I want to know who she is working for, and if she knows anything about Tomas’s location.”

“I’m coming too,” Ambrose declared, gripping onto Chandra’s staff. “I don’t want to miss out on an epic torture scene.”

Jacobi was helping Judah out of the room, and Ashera affectionately rolled her eyes at her vampire. “Okay, you too, princess.”

The three of them dragged Chandra off down the hall, the witch protesting the entire way.

It left myself, Ashera, and Malachi alone in the throne room. I knelt next to her on the floor where she was still resting. I brushed her hair away from her shoulders, drinking all of her in. I hadn’t seen her this relaxed in ages, and it was such a relief to know she was okay. That Mal was okay. We were all going to be okay.

I would see to it personally.

“Ashera,” my voice echoed in the now mostly empty throne room. “I should explain some things. I said I would.”

Her stunning green eyes studied me for a moment, before sliding to glance over at Malachi. The incubus moved into my periphery and nodded his head. I hated taking time away from their reunion, but there were things she needed to know about herself. Things she needed to know about all of us. About the bigger picture.

We stayed on the floor. Mal seemingly needed to move around after so long in confinement, so he paced next to us.

“I’ve been waiting five thousand years for you to be reborn,” I began in a low voice. This was going to be hard for me. “Prior to that, you and I had been mates for thousands of years. Jareth was the third member of our mate group.”

“So I have another god out there as a mate?” She asked, shocked.

I shook my head. “No. Jareth...” I sighed and ran my hand through my hair. “I’m making a mess of this. Let me start again.

“I’ve mentioned that the gods created the various species found here in Dunya. They’d done so with the intent of creating a slave labor force. Their first attempt at creating a being similar to them resulted in humans with no magic. So we went back to the drawing board. Eventually, we were able to separate the different traits all gods possessed, and so Dunya was born.

“We’ve always been ruled by a collection of gods called the Convocation, with one person sitting at its head. They had decreed that the Void was to be put in place and monitored closely, but it wasn’t impassible as it is now. Gods and their slaves from Dunya were able to come and go, though no one from Dunya could travel freely on their own.”

I took a moment to gather myself. Speaking of what happened with Ashera and Jareth tugged at the already unraveling edges of my mind. Poking it like this...well, I just hoped Ashera was ready to get fucked hard afterward. That would be the only thing to keep me from spiraling.

“The three of us were on the Convocation. That’s actually where we all met. We’d known instantly that we were mates, and things were pretty great. Until Jahmal succeeded in transforming Dunya into a slave farm.” I can’t fight the smile that spreads across my face at what came next. “You were a thing of stunning fury. You didn’t believe that the peoples of Dunya should be slaves. You argued that we had made them all from pieces of ourselves and they should be treated with respect. You wanted to look at all of us as one family.

“Keres, another member of the Convocation, and your rival for the head position, was determined to make sure that not only did Dunya stay enslaved, but that you were kicked off the Convocation entirely. Jealous, bitch.”

I then tell them about how Keres had had Ashera removed from the Convocation, yet Jareth and I had remained—staunch advocates for the

world as Ashera saw it. How Ashera had finally led a rebellion against the Convocation, and while Dunya had been freed, we'd been left to pay the price. I told them about Jareth, and how each of her mates, aside from Winta, was a shard of his soul. I told them about Inara, and how Winta was her newest reincarnation.

Finally, I told them about how I'd thought I'd failed in getting her through the Void. How I'd spent five thousand years not sure if she would be reborn.

"I..." Ashera leaned her head against mine, love swelling in my chest with the touch. "Daimon."

"Shh." I ran my hands down her arms. "I'm okay. And now that we're together again, I'm whole. Once you take your last mate, you'll understand."

She nodded.

"I don't want to dwell on the past, goddess. I want to focus on the here and now. And right now, you're pressed up against me, and it's killing my dick." I chuckled.

She looked up at me with a brilliant smile—thankfully willing to let the heavy weight of my confessions rest for the time being—and then looked over to Mal. "You probably need to feed, don't you?"

"Uh, well, I managed to feed myself a bit, but..." Malachi trailed off, and the room was instantly flooded with heat between the two. "I've fucking missed you, Sher."

I got to my feet, tugging Ashera up with me. "Jacobi said we were safe," I mused. "So what if..."

"What if what?" Ashera asked. Her eyes lit up with excitement, and I could feel her pulling off the energy in the room. She was eager to feel Malachi against her again, and I wanted to be a part of that.

"What if we make it into a little game, goddess?" I whispered. "How long do you think you can run from us?"

I looked over to Mal. The incubus's face was a mask of desire, and I knew I had guessed correctly. After being locked away for so long, he was desperate for his mate, but also wanted to work for it. It was in his blood.

"Run?" She bit her lip, and I wanted to bite it for her. Gods, I wanted to stretch her sweet little pussy. I wanted her to milk my cock as I bred her, my cum spilling out of her. What had I been thinking, turning this into a game? I needed to be buried balls deep in her now. But then, I caught a whiff of

her arousal, and I knew what I had been doing. She wanted to be chased, as badly as we wanted to catch her.

I pulled at the back of her neck, bringing her to me for a searing kiss. “Run,” I whispered. I pushed her away with a smile. “I’ll give you a five minute head start, but then you better hope you’re fast, otherwise I’ll fuck you until you’re begging for more.”

Mal’s arousal was nearly palpable. He wanted to claim his mate, to assert his dominance over her once more. I couldn’t blame him. Ashera looked at both of us with a smirk.

“Better run, goddess. Your mate here looks like he wants to rip you apart if he lays his hands on you first, and I don’t think I’ll stop him.”

She turned and took off, racing through the halls until her golden hair disappeared around a corner. Malachi was like a caged animal, even though he was free from his prison. He paced the floors, growling under his breath, and sniffing the air for Ashera. My own cock was hard, aching between my legs. I wouldn’t stop Mal if he got to her first though. Gods knew he needed it. He needed to feel something solid, to know he was safe once more. I would be lying if I said that the thought of watching the nearly feral demon maul my mate didn’t turn me the fuck on.

“One minute, my perfect little goddess. I hope you’re far enough away.” I didn’t bother raising my voice. I knew she could hear me.

Her time was up. An animal was clawing for control inside me, demanding we find our mate this second. I looked at the seething incubus beside me. “It’s time.”

He took off without another word, sprinting down the hallway Ashera had run down. I turned and took the opposite hall, using all my senses to find my mate. I couldn’t smell her. I couldn’t hear her. I couldn’t see her. But I knew she was here, somewhere. I could sense her laughing at me, taunting me.

There was an invisible thread that tied us together, all I needed to do was allow it to guide me.

“Oh, goddess, you have no idea what I have in store for you...” I tiptoed around the corner of the hallway, peering into the next corridor, but it was empty. “Ashera, don’t you want to play with me? Don’t you want my thick cock inside you, making you scream and cry?”

Her laughter peeled out around the next corner, and I jogged to follow the sound. “What about Mal’s cock? I think he wants to fuck you hard,

pretty goddess. He's feral for that sweet pussy of yours."

I chased her around the endless halls of the palace, her taunting voice calling me closer and closer. She wanted me to find her, I knew she did. My dick was at full attention, ready to catch her and make her mine. I was craving her skin, her sweat, the sweet taste pooling between her legs. I was desperate for all of it before I was taken away again.

Then, around another corner, I heard it. Quiet conversation. I tread softly, coming into the next corridor. Ashera had her back to a small alcove, Malachi keeping her pinned in place. The sexual energy between them was thick, and I could feel them both pulling from it already. I crossed the distance in a few steps, joining them with a laugh. "There you are, goddess. I've been looking for you everywhere."

Mal growled low in his chest, stepping closer to an already panting Ashera. His body language screamed that he was a male lost to the need for his mate. "I was just telling my little slut how much she's going to enjoy taking my cock. Every. Fucking. Inch."

I grinned. "Oh, she'll enjoy more than that. Tell me Ashera, who do you want to fuck your pert little ass, and who do you want to fuck that perfect pussy?"

She met my gaze, a shiver running down her spine. Fuck, she was delicious. I had gotten off so many times thinking about her, and now here she was in front of me. Alive. Real. *Mine*.

I snapped my fingers, and all of our clothes were neatly piled next to us. "Get on your knees, goddess. Let me show you how we both can worship you."

Ashera sank to her knees, getting on all fours, her chest rising and falling with rapid pants. I slipped underneath her, not giving her any time before I sank her onto my cock. She cried out, arching her back as she took me in.

"You're so beautiful stuffed with my cock," I murmured. "Now, let your incubus fuck your ass."

I held her hips close as Malachi knelt behind her, pushing inside her with a solid thrust. She groaned, knowing he needed her as much as she needed him. The two of them had been written in the sands of time, and their time apart was hard for both of them. I held her tightly as I began to thrust. I wasn't gentle. Wasn't slow. I was hard and fast, and Mal was the same behind Ashera. We fucked her through her cries and pleas for "more"

and “harder.” We fucked her through her shakes and trembles as she came the first time, and didn’t stop when she came again. We were savage with her, unable to hold ourselves back.

Sweat was dripping down my perfect goddess’s face, but we weren’t done with her yet.

“Gods,” she cried. “Oh, gods!”

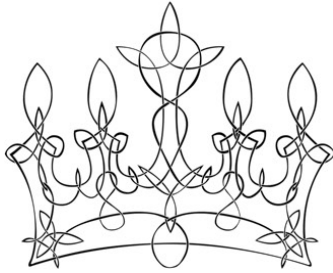
“Just one god,” I grunted. “Me.”

I tugged on the soft flesh of her hips, my cock exploding deep into her pussy as we claimed her all over again. My knot locked her to me, her screams ringing up and down the hall as the pressure stretched out her orgasm.

Close behind, Mal roared out as he came. “You’re mine, Sher. Mine forever.”

We stayed like that for a minute, our mate between us, out of breath and beautiful in her afterglow. We had things to do, but we could take a moment to appreciate this, couldn’t we? Because Malachi was right. She was mine. Ours. *Forever.*

ASHERA



Having two strong men claim me like Mal and Daimon had in the alcove left me sexually sated and my legs weak for a long time after. I wasn't sure what I had done to deserve such devotion from those males—from any of my mates. I swore that I would do my best to be deserving everyday for the rest of our lives.

Malachi and I—both refusing to be apart so soon after finding one another, again—wandered through the halls of what I now knew was Sahira's summer palace. I needed some time to just be with him, soak in his presence. Our hands met, fingers tangling together, as we continued on in silence. I knew that he would talk about what had happened in that cell when he was ready.

"I saw the look that passed between you and Judah, Ashera." I glanced over at him. "We're going to have to bring him into the fold, especially after everything that Daimon told us."

I sighed. "I know. I'm not opposed to it." I paused to gather my thoughts. "I just don't want any of you to feel neglected or like alone, you aren't enough."

"We don't," Mal assured me. "When we thought you were a powerful succubus, we all knew you would need several mates to keep you strong. Now that we know you're a goddess? Well, everything makes a hell of a lot more sense."

I laughed softly at that. "It does, doesn't it?"

"He's a little rough around the edges. The guy was locked away for three-quarters of a century. Alone. So, we might need to ease him back into

sex.” Malachi scratched the back of his head. “After Chandra had tortured me a bit with her magic, I needed to feed. So I described a fantasy of you to him. He was into it.”

“Why don’t we find him and just talk?” I suggested. “We can see where things go from there. I’m not about to force him to bond with me just because of what Daimon told us.”

“Fair enough.” He leaned down to press a kiss to my forehead.

We continued to wander throughout the halls, peeking in rooms to see where Judah was hiding. While we’d agreed to find the witch king, we still wanted some time to ourselves, so it was more of a passive search than us actually seeking him out.

A soft curse from behind a dark, wooden door caught our attention. We looked at each other before heading in that direction. The door was cracked, and a soft light spilled through the opening. Another soft curse had Mal’s hand pressing against the wood.

“Judah?” Malachi called. “What the hell are you doing?”

My demon pushed the door open to reveal a small, windowless library. The walls were covered floor to ceiling with books, with a small desk situated in the middle of the space. A magical flame flickered above the desk’s surface, giving off just enough light to see, but not nearly as much as that which flooded the halls from the windows. The witch king stood next to one of the bookshelves. He was now clean, his long black hair tied up into a bun on the top of his head, and his face was freshly shaven. While still dull, the markings visible on his skin pulsed with a soft blue light. He’d fed. Good.

My heart ached. Judah had been left in the dark for so long, being out in natural light probably hurt his eyes. It wouldn’t surprise me if it overwhelmed his senses, and he sought refuge here, in a room without windows. Without my permission, my feet carried me into the room. Just because we hadn’t finalized the bond yet didn’t mean that he wasn’t my mate. As with all the others, I felt a strong desire to care for him, heal him as best I could.

Judah’s head whipped up from his book, a flash of fear shining too bright in his eyes before his brain registered that we meant him no harm. I clenched my fists by my side at the sight. I never wanted to see any of my mates scared like that. I would do anything and everything in my power to ensure that he never needed to feel that way again.

After an awkward moment of silence, Judah's body relaxed, and he sent us both a smile. "What are you two doing here?"

"We were walking around," Mal replied, a smile of his own stretching his full, kissable lips. "Looking for you, actually."

The witch king's eyebrows shot up. "Me?" He closed his book and placed it back on the shelf, turning to face us fully. "Why?"

Malachi bumped me lightly with his hip, silently telling me to take the lead now. I shot him an amused look over my shoulder before returning my attention back to Judah. Surprisingly, I felt nervous about telling him everything. Not once had I felt nervous about my other mates.

None of my other mates had been locked in a tiny cell, magically starved, and tortured for seventy-five years. Judah had a lot of trauma, and I didn't want to add to that or make him feel pressured by being my mate. I wanted to go about this delicately, which had me at a loss for words.

How did you tell someone who had just gained their freedom that they were bound to you for the rest of their life? Would he see mating with me as another form of imprisonment? Would he refuse, wanting that coveted freedom?

Forcing my lungs to take a deep inhale, I took another—more tentative—step into the room. Judah's attention focused on me. His eyes immediately heated as his gaze dragged up and down my body. I could feel his curiosity and his desire. I didn't pick up any hesitancy or fear, which had me relaxing.

"We wanted to talk to you." At Mal's soft cough, I amended, "I wanted to talk to you."

His curiosity now outweighed his desire as he continued to stare at me. I saw what Malachi meant when he'd said that Judah lacked social skills. That was okay.

"Feel free to interrupt me at any point," I said. "We have a lot to fill you in on."

"Of course." Judah nodded.

"Right." I looked up at Mal for encouragement. His amused smirk, coupled with his own nod, had me pushing forward.

So I told Judah everything. I started at the beginning and worked my way through to freeing him and Malachi. By the time I was done, Judah had moved to sit on the edge of the desk, his legs spread, and his arms folded over his chest. The face he was making suggested he was lost in thought.

“Sher,” Mal said, pushing me closer to the male. “You left out one very important detail.”

“She did?” Judah asked, his attention now focused back on us.

“Do you remember when I told you about her in our cells?” Mal asked. Judah flushed scarlet but nodded. “Do you remember how you felt?”

“Yes,” he mumbled.

“How would you like it if the queen were to wrap those full lips around your cock?”

I sucked in a deep breath, my head whipping around so I could stare at Malachi. Judah sputtered, too embarrassed to answer.

“The two of you are mates,” Malachi declared in a firm, no nonsense voice.

I winced.

“I know.” Judah’s soft reply had my head twirling back to him. He knew? “I just wasn’t sure she would want me.”

Now it was my turn to sputter. “What?”

He didn’t move from his seat on the desk, his head hanging low as he spoke. “I’ve never been with anyone before.”

Malachi released a dark, sinister chuckle before lashing out his arm. His large hand closed around the witch king’s throat, causing the other male to gasp. Judah’s gaze latched onto my incubus’s face, questioning. His body remained relaxed, telling me that he trusted Mal. The fact warmed my heart.

Instead of speaking, Mal moved so he stood behind the desk and Judah, keeping a firm hold on other male’s neck as he did so. Once he got there, he seated himself behind Judah on his knees. Judah’s back was flush against Malachi’s chest. One was breathing in rough pants while the other looked down at me with delicious, carnal promise.

“Take off your pants, witch.” Judah flinched slightly at the command, clearly not expecting it. He rushed to do as he was told, releasing a thick cock that had blue markings running along it—the same way they ran along the rest of his body.

I licked my lips at the sight. My attention now wholly on Judah’s lower half. So I missed when Malachi tipped the male’s head back until he spoke again. “My little slut is going to suck your cock, your majesty. You’re going to bury your hands in her golden hair and do exactly as I tell you.”

Judah nodded as much as Malachi’s hold on him would allow. The demon shifted his attention to me, a wicked grin spreading across his face.

“He’s not allowed to come down your throat.”

I could only nod.

“Now wrap those lips around his cock and suck, little slut,” he growled.

In a daze, I moved so I could lean my hands on either side of Judah’s legs and lower myself so my mouth was hovering just over the head of his dick. My gaze shot up to the witch’s wanting to make sure this was okay. The longing and heat I found staring back at me had my pussy clenching. My breath hitched when he tangled his hands tightly in my hair, pushing my head down.

Malachi tsked. “I didn’t tell you to do that, witch.”

The tugging eased. I slid my tongue along the slit, and the sound that left Judah’s throat had a smile spreading across my lips. It was hungry and filled with the need for release. I lapped at him again before closing my lips around the head of him and sucking.

“Holy fuck!” Judah groaned, his fingers flexing against my scalp.

“Don’t let her set the pace,” Malachi ordered. “Push her head down on your cock. She can take it.”

Judah didn’t hesitate to listen, and pushed down firmly on the back of my head, shoving his cock down my throat until my lips were flush against him. He held me there, waiting for Malachi to deliver another order.

“Now fuck her face, your majesty. Our little cum slut loves having her mouth stuffed with her mate’s dick. Don’t go gentle on her. Her need is too great, and so is yours.”

Judah slowly slid my head back up, letting me pause to suck hard on the tip, before slamming back down my throat. Gods, this was perfect. He fucked my mouth like it was my pussy, fast and hard. I was so turned on; my nails bit into the wood of the desk.

“Stop.”

I whimpered when Malachi’s hands replaced Judah’s, pulling me off of the throbbing cock in my mouth. He chuckled as he released me, moving to stand next to me. He pointed a finger at Judah, a silent order to remain where he was.

He slid his fingers along my collarbone, trailing up over my shoulder to release the strap that held the top part of my dress in place. The fabric slithered along my skin, pebbling my nipples as it went. Malachi’s large hands then pushed the dress down my legs so it pooled at my feet, leaving me completely bare before Judah.

The male released a tortured groan as he looked at me. I could feel how desperate he was to touch me, but knew that he wouldn't unless he was told he could.

"Get off the desk." Judah immediately complied. "Sher, lay on the desk with those thick thighs of yours spread wide. Let the king see how dripping wet you are."

Moaning softly, I did as I was told, spreading my legs wide and gripping the sides of the desk. Malachi growled his approval as he moved to stand by my head, the perfect spot to control this situation.

"Watch." My eyes snapped up to him at the command. "Not you, little slut. You need to watch the witch."

I dragged my gaze away from the commanding demon. Judah's markings, which had been glowing softly before this, now flared with light. Did they tell his moods? I couldn't wait to find out.

Malachi's calloused hands dragged across my nipples, causing my back to arch in a silent request for more. Instead of doing it again, his fingers trailed over my body, always coming back to circle my nipples but never touching them again. My breathing turned ragged with each sweep. I needed more.

"Do you see how responsive she is?" Malachi asked. "I haven't even touched her clit or her pussy yet, but her body is begging to be filled with come."

Judah groaned, his eyes glued to what Mal was doing to my body. His cock dripped as he watched me, and his hands were tightly clenched at his sides. He wanted to touch and taste me. He wanted to fuck me.

"Please," I moaned.



Judah

I WAS PRETTY sure I'd forgotten how to breathe as I stared down at Ashera. Her golden skin shimmered in the low light, her chest heaving with each breath she took. I wanted to look everywhere all at once. I wanted to touch her everywhere all at once.

After seventy-five years without touch aside from my own, I was starved for it. I hadn't fully realized how much until just now. I didn't want to fuck Ashera simply for the pleasure it would bring me. I wanted to bury myself so deep in her that she was all I could feel. I wanted her to overwhelm me in every possible way.

I hadn't been ashamed when I'd admitted that I had never touched another person sexually. I'd been worried that Ashera—this sexual goddess—would think less of me because I wasn't sure how to handle myself. The fact that my mind now tended to wander without my permission only added to my insecurity. What if it strayed when I was trying to please her? There was no shame, but there was worry.

I should have known Malachi wouldn't have allowed me to feel like that for long. I also should have known that my inexperience wouldn't bother my mate. I was made for her.

Another breathy, "Please."

My gaze rose to Mal's face, but he was leaning down to suck one of Ashera's nipples into his mouth. I didn't know what came over me, but I wanted to taste her. I wanted to run my tongue along her skin. Take as much of her into me as I could. Because I knew. I knew that she would be the one to ground me. She was my salvation.

My body moved as if drawn by a string until I found my head down next to the demon assassin's, Ashera's other nipple slipping into my mouth. My cock jerked at the taste of her. Sunlight. A spring breeze. Sin. Gods, she was delicious. I would never get enough of her. I would find a way to ensure that I was bound to her, body and soul, for eternity.

A large, warm hand closed around my wrist, bringing my attention back to the present. I didn't want to take my mouth off of my mate, so I simply flicked my gaze up to meet Malachi's eyes. He had a smug grin on his face as his hand brought mine between Ashera's legs.

"Before you put your cock in her," he rumbled, "you're going to want to taste her here."

With that, he guided my fingers to rub against Ashera's clit. I'd read enough about it to know where it was, but I wasn't prepared for the response touching it would earn me. Ashera released a deep, husky moan that caused my cock to leak. The more Mal moved my fingers over it the harder she panted, occasionally whispering my name.

I released her nipple with a pop, wanting to watch her face as Malachi and I continued our assault. Her full lips were opened in an O; her eyes glazed over with pleasure. A charming, pink flush spread across her chest as her nails dug into the desk. Her hips started to move against us, only heightening the sensations for her.

“She’s close,” Malachi growled. “Make her come, Judah.”

He removed his hand from mine. I had a small moment of panic. Would I be able to make her come?

“Judah, gods. Please,” Ashera begged. “Please make me come.”

I snapped out of the spiral I’d started down, my fingers beginning to move on their own in the same way that Malachi had shown me. Going on instinct, I once again leaned down to take a nipple into my mouth, using my other hand to toy with the neglected tip.

“Yes! Yes!” Ashera changed over and over again, her voice increasing with volume with each stroke of my fingers and flick of my tongue.

I lightly bit down on her nipple before soothing the sting away with a kiss. That seemed to set her off. My mate came, screaming my name, her thighs shaking. It was a beautiful thing to behold. I wanted to make her do it again. I wanted to see this powerful woman turned into a puddle, begging for me to make her come. I wanted to watch my cock as it disappeared into her pussy.

I wanted to make her mine.

“Get on your knees between her legs,” Mal ordered. His tone was hoarse with pleasure, and I was surprised that he seemed to be enjoying himself as much as Ashera and I were.

I got on my knees, awed by the sight of my mate’s quivering pink pussy before me. I didn’t need Malachi to tell me to lean in and lick her. My need to discover what she tasted like was too strong to ignore. The gasp that left her lips as I slowly dragged my tongue across her made me bring my hands up to her hips, pulling her closer. I wanted to weld my face to her pussy and live here.

Her taste flooded my mouth, and I wanted this to be the first thing in my mouth every day for the rest of my life. Perhaps I could invent something that would allow her to simply sit on my face with her pussy pressed up against my mouth all day.

I was so lost in her, I hadn’t noticed that her hands had moved from the side of the desk until she was gripping my hair just as hard as I was

clutching her hips. She was once again chanting my name, and a rush of pride flooded my veins.

“Slide two fingers into her pussy, Judah. Then crook them ever so slightly.” Malachi’s whispered demand didn’t take my attention away from my mate.

I did as he suggested, and once I’d crooked my fingers, pressing against the wall of her pussy, Ashera’s hips nearly flew off the desk. Her hands clamped me tighter against her. She was screaming my name now. I let my magic flood my fingers, releasing a small charge onto the spot that I was rubbing.

My mate came again, her pussy clamped down so tight around my fingers that I couldn’t move them. So I kept urging my magic into her, sucking on her clit in the process. I couldn’t be sure how long her climax lasted, but by the time her slick cunt released me, my fingers were tingling. Her body became limp on the desk as her chest heaved, trying to get some much needed oxygen.

“Now,” Malachi said as he approached the desk opposite me. His pants were gone. “Help turn her around and bend her over the desk. You’re going to fuck her tight little cunt while I fuck her mouth.”

Ashera groaned. I helped her up and then bent her over. The sight of her ass in the air, and then her pussy once again glistening as she spread her legs a little had me desperate to get inside her. I moved into position, my hands gripping her hips so hard that I dented her skin. I didn’t stop to think. I just thrust deep and moaned at the sensation.

Malachi’s moan drew my attention to the large male. He had his hands in Ashera’s hair and was thrusting into her mouth. Her eyes were closed in pleasure as she took all of him. My cock twitched. I wouldn’t last like this.

So I started to thrust, making sure to press as far in as I could with each stroke. Soon, my mate was pressing back against me. Her hands were tightly gripping the desk near her head to keep her from moving too much as Malachi and I used her for our own pleasure.

I allowed one hand to drift to her clit, needing her to squeeze my cock the way she did my fingers. Now. I was so close. I didn’t want to finish without her.

“Strangle his cock, little slut,” Mal demanded.

That triggered her release, and she moaned around the incubus’s dick as she clenched down around me. Malachi came with a low grunt, but I

couldn't hold back my roar as I came, my cock pulsing deep in Ashera's sweet pussy.

A flood of heat seared my inner left thigh. The mating mark. I watched in awe as my mark started to appear on Ashera's right ass cheek. It was the triple moon goddess. Very fitting. I slowly pulled out of my mate, pleasure flooding me when I watched my come start to leak out of her.

Glancing down at my thigh, I noticed that a crown had formed and wrapped around most of my leg. I would wear this symbol of my commitment proudly. I'd come through hell and found paradise.



Ashera

JUDAH, Malachi, and I were heading to the kitchens to find something to eat. For the first time, I felt whole. I hadn't realized that something was missing until Judah and I had finalized our mate bond. Despite the chaos and turmoil around me, I had a sense of inner peace now. All of my mates were here, and they were all safe.

Unfortunately, we still had a long way to go before we could settle down peacefully.

Once we'd eaten, I would need to check in with Ambrose, Thorne and Winta. I was eager to see what information Chandra had given us about Tomas. We needed to find that asshole. Daimon had let slip while we were getting dressed from our last romp that he suspected Tomas was Keres's puppet here in Dunya. He couldn't be sure whether or not Keres had felt me be reborn, but it would behoove her to have eyes and ears here, regardless.

A sick part of me hoped he was her puppet. The misogynistic fuck was the puppet to a woman. Priceless.

Although, the issue Keres presented made me realize that once we were finished with Tomas, we weren't entirely done with our war. We were going to need to head through the Void, into Jahmal, and face the crazy bitch. After all, it was her power that bound Daimon to the Void, ripping him from my side without notice. She'd also taken something from me. Something I had every intention of taking back.

“Sher?” Mal’s voice drew me out of my thoughts. He was standing in front of the doorway to the kitchens, intently studying my face. “Let’s grab something to eat on the go and we can find the others.”

“I know where they are,” Judah called from inside the room. His head poked around Malachi’s large body a moment later. “While I’m not yet up to full magical strength, I was able to replenish a bit. The castle is back under my control.”

“Under your control?” I asked.

He nodded. “There’s a magical bond between the ruling monarch and all of the palaces in Sahira. It helps us if we’re ever invaded. Though, I should look into trying to adjust the magic for those who would betray from within.”

He wanders back into the kitchens muttering to himself. I had to stifle the urge to laugh. He was so adorable. Mal just shook his head with a roll of his eyes, gesturing to me to follow him.

Once we’d grabbed some food, Malachi and I followed Judah into a small room off the throne room. All my other mates were waiting for me. The room reminded me of the space in the palace at Shaytan where I first fucked Ambrose. A glance at my vampire told me that he felt the same. I sent him an air kiss.

Everyone was gathered around a table, food and drinks spread out amongst them. They all seemed pleased to see us. Though I was sure I was about to foul the mood by telling them all I’d taken yet another mate. I knew a certain amount of competition was normal, but there were days I wished they’d all just take a break.

“We know, my love.” Jacobi drew everyone’s attention to him when he spoke. “Daimon told us.”

The others nodded.

“And you’re all...okay?” I stretched out the last word in disbelief.

“He seems quiet and nerdy.” Ambrose shrugged.

I blinked. “What...What does that have to do with anything?”

“He just doesn’t feel threatened, dick slayer.” Caspian chuckled.

I opened my mouth, then thought better of it and closed it again. I wasn’t going to respond to that nonsense. Males were stupid.

“After what I just witnessed?” Malachi said with a shit eating grin. “You might want to be worried.”

I groaned and slapped my hand over my face. Gods.

“Don’t.” I held up my hand. I didn’t even need to see Ambrose or Caspian to know that they were about to start something. “Not now. This is the dumbest argument ever. I do not have it in me to listen to it.”

Ambrose grumbled a bit but otherwise didn’t push the issue. Caspian just laughed. I glanced over at Judah to see that he was bright red and trying hard not to make eye contact with anyone. Sweet thing. There was something about Judah that made me feral with the need to protect him. He was my adorable weirdo. No one was allowed to mess with him.

“Why don’t you tell us what the witch said?” Malachi asked, assuming his normal position as leader of our group. “Did she give us anything useful?”

Thorne ran a hand through his hair with a growl. “She might have caved quickly in telling us where you and Judah were, but she was rather reluctant to tell us anything about what the fuck is going on.”

I groaned.

“That doesn’t mean we didn’t get anything.” Ambrose shot a glare over at Thorne. “Tomas was the one who convinced Judah’s twin to imprison him. He’d been working with Chandra and had given her the knowledge to take witches’ souls and control the living souls of the other species. He knew that there would be a rebellion if Judah wasn’t king, so having his twin takeover was the easiest solution to taking the kingdom.”

“I’m not surprised she was working with Tomas,” I snarled. “That fucker seems to be at the core of all of Dunya’s issues.”

“She was in love with him,” Winta said. “Judah’s brother. That’s the main reason she took Malachi. She wanted him back. I guess she’d gotten worried when he hadn’t immediately returned from his trip to Qamar. She also wanted to attempt to control Mal.”

“Bitch probably thought she could send Mal back to us and have him kill us all.” Thorne aggressively stabbed a piece of food. The thought of one of the group being controlled like that had us all tensing. “We were lucky we got here when we did. She was charging up to do the ritual.”

I snarled, my hand reaching out to grasp Malachi’s as if he was still in danger.

“Does she know where Tomas is?” Mal asked, his fingers curling around mine.

“No,” Thorne huffed. “The bitch hasn’t seen him since he helped her gain power here. He’s sent messengers, but nothing that indicates where the

fuck he might be.”

Several murmurs of, “Fuck,” rang out around the room. If Chandra didn’t know where Tomas was hiding, she wasn’t useful anymore.

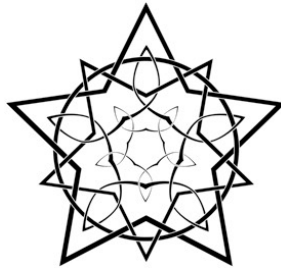
“Is she still alive?” Judah asked quietly, obviously thinking along the same lines.

“For now.” Ambrose shrugged. “Justice wasn’t for us to deal out.”

“No,” the witch king agreed. “It’s mine.”

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CASPIAN



Since Chandra had no idea where to find the pain in our asses, we had to go back to the drawing board. We needed to find Tomas, and there was only one way I could see us finding him. I had to use my powers the same way I had pinpointed Malachi.

I couldn't deny that the thought terrified me. I had nearly killed myself the last time I tried. While my magic was replenished, I still wasn't at full power like I had been before trekking up to the summit of that mountain. But we didn't have time to stop moving. We had to hunt down Tomas. *Now*. This war needed to end. The longer we let it go on, the more danger we were putting Ashera in, and after what we had all gone through when Mal was missing, I could only imagine how much of a wreck we would be without our mate. I wasn't sure if any of us would survive it.

So if it meant I had to sacrifice myself to keep her safe and end this war, I would. I would do whatever it took to keep my beloved dick slayer safe. Anything. Everything.

We were still at the summer palace, preparing for our next move. Our armies were camped out in the courtyards, resting and recuperating after several rather intense days. Staying in one place wasn't bad for Mal or Judah either. I wanted to hate Judah for being another mate, but I found I couldn't.

All I wanted was for her to be happy, and if that included Judah, so be it. A man who had spent the last seventy-five years in a cell was hard to hate anyway – you just felt sorry for the poor guy. Seventy-five years

without real food, or drink, or magic, or the taste of a sweet pussy. I couldn't imagine.

Everyone else was in the dining room eating breakfast, and I was in the room we had claimed as our bedroom gathering my things. I needed to make sure I had everything I needed before I snuck out and made my way to the highest point in the area. I had passed a large dune on my way in, and I had to hope that would be tall enough.

The magic would be different this time. I wasn't searching for my mate, or someone I had a personal connection with. In fact, I had no connection at all to Tomas. Finding him was going to be hard as fuck, if not impossible, and it was going to take up an insane amount of magic. But I had to try, for all of our sakes.

"What are you doing?" Daimon's booming voice carried over from the doorway, and I spun around with my rucksack in my hands. He leaned on the door frame, knitting needles in hand, working away on what looked like a blue scarf. Gods, this guy was weird as fuck. What kind of god knit? More so, what kind of person knit scarves while we were in the desert?

"I'm just tidying up." A lie, but a small one. I didn't want to worry Ashera.

Daimon smirked, his knitting needles clicking. "You know I can tell when you're lying, right? And you know she's going to kill you if you leave again."

I sighed, taking a seat on the bed. "Yeah, I know. But what am I supposed to do? Just do nothing, and let us spend the next decade searching for Tomas while he builds more and more insurgents? And what if Ashera gets hurt? I would never forgive myself if I didn't do everything I could."

"You nearly killed yourself last time." *Click. Click. Click.*

No shit. "Yeah, I know." Way to make me feel great about my options, Daimon.

The clicking stopped. "There is another option, you know."

I paused, looking up at the hulking god. "There is?"

"I could help you. If you use me as an additional power source for your magic, you'll probably have more range and be less likely to die." He cocked his head to the side, resuming his knitting. "If you want help, that is. I completely understand if you want to die."

"You'll be in massive shit with Ashera if you help me." What he was saying made sense though. I had passed out last time because I had drained

my reserves. But if I had an additional power source backing me up... fuck, it was genius. Why didn't I think of it before?

Daimon shrugged, grinning. "I'm sure I can find a way into her good graces again." From the waggle of his eyebrows, I knew exactly what he meant. The worst part was that it would probably work. His cock was literally god-like.

At that exact moment, Ashera poked her head around the corner. "Get back into whose good graces?" She narrowed her eyes at me, crossing her arms. I knew she didn't trust me further than she could throw me right now, and I couldn't say I blamed her. "Caspian?"

My mouth opened to explain, but nothing came out. Thankfully, Daimon jumped to my rescue. "Nothing, goddess. Cas and I are going on a quick, little boys trip – so fun. Camping, fishing, hunting, woven crafts, all those neat things guys do together." He stuffed his knitting into his pocket, and dragged me out the door.

"Neither of you are remotely interested in any of that," she accused, glaring at me. I was going to break. I was going to tell her exactly what we were doing, where I was planning on going, and she was going to be pissed.

"Yes, well, who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Even centuries old. I love you so much, and I'll see you when we return. Kisses!" With that, Daimon held my arm tightly, and poofed us so we were outside the castle. "You're the worst liar in the world." He sounded incredibly offended by that.

I sneered. "Yeah, well I'm not sure lying to my mate is something to be proud of."

"You were right. She would be worried and stressed, and there's no reason for her to be until there's a reason for her to be. If it was just you, yeah, she probably has a reason to stress. You don't exactly have a great track record. But with me...we'll be fine." He grinned at me, and not for the first time, I realized Daimon might be mildly unhinged. All those years alone in the woods with nothing but his knitting for company had messed with his head. And here I was, willingly about to risk my life with his help.

It was fine. Everything was absolutely fine.



Daimon

I TREKKED QUICKLY across the desert plain, hoping Caspian was following closely behind. It seemed that since mating with Ashera, I had more time with them before being pulled back to my wreck of a cottage in the Void. However, I was still worried that at any given moment I would be transported away, and Caspian would be left alone to track down Tomas. That concerned me, because it hadn't gone over well last time. I also didn't want to leave the fae stranded and waiting for me to return—though he was stubborn enough to take the risk without me if I vanished, the fucker.

Ashera had a lot of mates, and even though all of us could take care of ourselves, we still needed to have each other's backs in everything we did. If Caspian needed me for this, then I would be there. That was just how it worked in a bonded group. I figured he would need some place with a bit of height, so I made my way toward the highest dune in the area. The sand wanted to pull me down, making it difficult to climb up, but eventually we both summited the dune.

I smiled at Caspian. "What's next?"

"I need to bond with the earth. Then I'll need to concentrate." He was already pulling his shoes off, sinking his bare feet into the sand. He glared at me as he straightened up again. "That means no fucking clicking those godsdamn knitting needles."

I held my hands up in defense. "No knitting needles, I swear. I wouldn't want to get Ashera's present dusty anyway."

Caspian frowned. "What are you even making?"

"A scarf for my goddess. It's going to look beautiful wrapped around her pretty neck. I hope she'll let me use it during sexy times. Everything I've made over the decades has been for her, but this will be the first one she actually gets to keep." I paused, thinking back to my other projects. "Everything else I threw in the fire once I finished."

"Makes total sense." Caspian rolled his eyes, shaking his head. "Okay. Do I need to be touching you? How does this work?"

I nodded. "That would probably be best. You can hold my hand or just put your arm on my shoulder. Whatever you want. As soon as I feel you pulling the magic from the earth, I'll start sending some of my own magic your way. That way it'll still be your power, just amplified."

“Okay. Let’s do this.” Caspian shook out his arms and legs, replanting his feet firmly in the sand. I held my arm out toward him, and he wrapped his hand around my wrist. Connected with both myself and the earth, he let his eyes close, and I let mine do the same. I felt him lift a leg and then slam it back down.

I could feel Caspian pulling at the magic of the earth, feeding his energy with it. I immediately began fueling my own energy, running it through Caspian’s body. Because we were connected, I could feel what he felt. See what he saw. There, spread out before us was all of Dunya, beautiful in its simplicity.

There were all the souls, free to do as they please, live as they hoped. They were free because of Ashera’s sacrifices, both in her past life and her current one. My mate’s kindness knew no bounds, and she had always cared more about others than she had about herself. This was a testament to exactly that. Caspian pulled away from all of Dunya, narrowing in on the smaller kingdoms.

Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Caspian was tiring, but not anywhere close to the way he had been before—exhausting himself nearly to the point of death. Joining our powers had been a good call. “Use more of my power,” I murmured, slicing through the silence between us. “Pull more from me to give yourself more strength, and focus on your why. The reason you need to find Tomas. The reason that keeps you going every morning when you wake up. What’s that reason?”

“Ashera,” he whispered, and with a mental tug, he sapped more of my energy. At once the map became clearer, and there was a bright flash of light from the corner of our joined vision. There.

“I should’ve fucking known,” I muttered. But I didn’t get a chance to say anything else, because in another breath the map was gone, and I was back at the Void.



Ashera

DAIMON AND CASPIAN being best friends all the sudden was suspicious, but to be completely honest, I didn’t have enough time to dwell on it for too

long. We had things to do, and people to find, and if Daimon and Cas wanted to fuck off and do whatever they were doing, then that was fine.

I strode down the hallway they had disappeared from, looking for my other mates. Malachi and Jacobi were coming up with a plan for our next move, and I wasn't sure if Thorne and Winta were sitting in on that, or where they were. I should probably be there too, but I needed a minute to get my thoughts in order.

It felt like I hadn't stopped running since the time I took power, like we had constantly been on the move constantly on either the offensive or the defensive, and I was exhausted. I wanted a moment for myself and my mates where we could just be, just exist in each other's company without being worried about what would come next.

Of course, that wouldn't happen until we found Tomas. Wherever the hell he was hiding. I hoped Mal and Jacobi had a good plan to find him, because we were going to need one.

"Little queen." Ambrose's voice pulled me from my thoughts, and I turned to see him hiding in the shadows of one of the many bedrooms. "What's on your mind?"

I smiled softly at my vicious mate, once so cold and cruel, now wanting to make sure I was okay. The drastic change had been a wonderful surprise. "I'm good, Ambrose. Really. Just a lot on my mind."

He smirked. "Well come in here, and let me help you relax. You look like you need it."

He wasn't wrong. I took his hand, and he pulled me into the decadently decorated bedroom. In the middle of the room was a massive four post bed, dressed in deep green linens. A huge window overlooked the courtyard below. "What did you have in mind?"

Ambrose purred, stepping closer towards me. "Well I want a taste of you, little queen, but that mouth of yours looks too perfect right now not to have something stuffed inside it." He tugged me up on the bed, trailing his fingers down my body. "But first, we need to get you out of these clothes."

My dress was ripped off me—tossed to the side of the bed—and he shucked his own clothes off as quickly as he could. As always with my vampire, the tension between us was enough for me to already start feeding, an energy that had never left us since our first meeting. Naked, he lay before me as tempting as a feast to a starving person. His cock was hard and throbbing in my hands, and I stroked it. With a groan, he stilled my hand.

“As amazing as this feels, I want your mouth wrapped around my cock, little queen. I want you to scream around it as I make you come.”

In a blink, he had us flipped so my head rested in front of his swollen cock, and his face was between my legs, his tongue already sliding through my slick folds. “You taste so good, Ashera,” he murmured.

Fuck. I leaned forward and took his cock in my mouth, sucking it deeply to the back of my throat. Gods, I loved tasting him – any of them. Having one of them in my mouth was like a treat for me, and Ambrose teasing me with his tongue at the same time was hot as hell. “Oh my god,” I moaned around his cock as his mouth found my clit, sucking hard. “Fuck me.”

I could feel his smile against me, then he sucked again, his tongue darting out to tease my sensitive skin. I bobbed around him, sucking him deep, and then pulling up to play with the thick head.

Ambrose’s fingers joined his tongue, and he slipped two inside my aching pussy, easing some of the need there. I couldn’t stop my hips from rising to meet his touch, his mouth or his fingers. But I tried to keep my focus on his massive dick in my mouth, and the sounds he was making, reverberating around my pussy. Gods, this kind of one on one was fun.

I forgot about everything. Tomas. The war. All of my stress melted away as I let Ambrose take control, and focused only on bringing him the same pleasure he brought me. My release was already building, and I was about to come all over his fingers and tongue. The idea excited me, knowing how much my vampire prince would love that.

I thrust my hips into his mouth, chasing my orgasm, and Ambrose finger fucked me harder. I pulled him deeper into my mouth, swallowing as he hit the back of my throat, and he moaned. Hard.

I came with a cry of his name around him, shaking as he pulsed his fingers through my release. He fucked my face with a vengeance, and I let my tongue and mouth do all the work as I floated through a post-orgasm high.

He groaned, and his cum spilled all in my mouth. Gods, he tasted good. I swallowed it all like the good girl I knew he wanted me to be. We lay like that for a moment, still connected. Eventually he pulled me up to cuddle in his arms, stroking my hair away from my face.

“Don’t you feel better now?” he whispered. His touch was gentle, goosebumps following his fingers.

“Mmm...absolutely.” I let my eyes drift closed, enjoying my quiet brain for a few minutes at least.

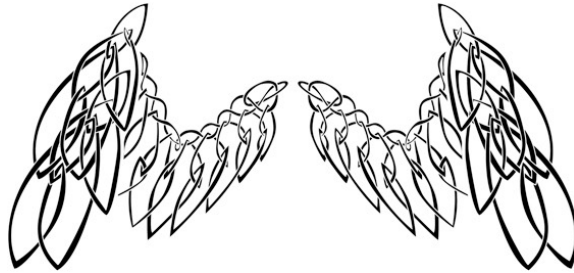
“I know where Tomas is.” My eyes immediately flew open at Caspian’s voice. *So much for that.* He stood in the doorway, out of breath and sweating, not bothered in the slightest by the sight of us basking in post-coital bliss.

It took a minute for my brain to process what he was saying, and then it clicked. “Repeat that for me one more time. Where’s Daimon?”

“I know where Tomas is. But you’re not going to like it. Because he’s in the Void, and Daimon is gone.”

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DAIMON



Surprisingly, I wasn't pissed off to be standing in the rubble of my former cottage. Not after Caspian and I had found Tomas. In fact, I had to fight the urge to clap my hands with glee. I leaned down, grabbing a large wooden beam, and slung it over my shoulder.

Whistling a jaunty tune, I leisurely made my way in the direction I'd seen Tomas's light. No one could get through the Void without my help. Even if that bloodsucking prick was working with Keres, there was no way she would have given him safe passage into Jahmal. No. She would have told him it was possible, but she wouldn't have told him how.

I was the only living being on this side of the Void to know how to get through alive. So I could take my time stalking my prey. I knew that my mate and bond brothers would get here as soon as they could, but they were clear on the other side of Dunya. Which meant that I could draw this out. I would make sure that Tomas was nice and ready to tell Ashera everything she wanted to know.

There was a game I used to play in my youth. Someone would hide, and someone else would find them. We also played a fun game of keep away. Perhaps this was the adult version of those. I did a little wiggle of excitement at the thought. I hadn't had this much fun in centuries.

"Oh vampire!" I bellowed. "You'd best be good at hiding! I'm coming for you!"

I continued whistling, making sure that I was loud enough for Tomas to hear me coming. What fun was it if I caught him completely by surprise? He needed to know that I was closing in on him. Know that no matter

where he ran, where he hid, I would find him. I was like a cat stalking a mouse, and I planned to toy with that mouse as much as possible until my mate arrived.

A deep inhale through my nose told me that Tomas was attempting to run to my right. Silly, vampire. There were no good hiding spots that way. I released a loud sigh. The least he could do was play the game right.

“You’re making this too easy! At least *try* to get away.”

I was close enough to him now that I could hear his pace increase, but he didn’t change direction. I tipped my head back in frustration. What was the point? Maybe, if I gave him a better incentive...

I sped to just in front of the former vampire ruler. He ran full tilt into my chest, releasing a gasp of horror when he bounced right off me and landed on his ass. I released a loud laugh as I stared down at him.

He’s smaller than I remember. I’d actually met the male once. He was one of the oldest beings in Dunya. I wrinkled my nose. *He certainly hasn’t aged well.*

What a shame.

I waved my wooden beam at him, a broad smile forming across my features. Then, I crouched down so our heads were almost level, letting the end of the beam rest against the forest floor. We studied each other for a moment, the fear radiating off him almost sending me into a fit of giggles.

“You’re not playing the game very well,” I accused.

“G-game?” How the fuck had this blubbering fool been the one to rise to so much power and trouble. I must have let my disgust show on my face, because the vampire flinched.

“You weren’t supposed to let me catch you,” I explained. I made sure to speak slowly. “I’m going to make sure that you do better.”

“Wha-?”

I didn’t let Tomas finish his question. Instead, I slammed my beam across his face, sending the vampire flying back several feet. Getting to my feet, I wandered over to make sure that I hadn’t knocked him out. He couldn’t play if he was out cold. I nudged him with the toe of my boot, and his groan told me he was still alert. Excellent.

“Now get up,” I growled. “The next time I catch you will be worse.”

I started counting.

Tomas didn’t wait, he scrambled to his feet, swaying those first few steps. He’d better get surer footing than that if he was going to give me a

good chase. He ran off as quickly as he could, making so much noise, I knew I would easily find him again.

“You’re boring!” I yelled. Couldn’t he at least give me something to work with here?



IT WAS OFFICIAL. Tomas was *terrible* at hiding. It was also possible that I was exceptional at seeking, but I was more inclined to believe that the vampire couldn’t hide to save his life. Which amused me because his life did depend on it, and he’d been on the run from Ashera for quite some time now. He was surprisingly bad at running, too. So slow.

I groaned when Tomas came into view again. I lost count of how many times I’d been able to catch him by this point. I was so bored, but I couldn’t kill him. That wasn’t my right, not after all the shit he put my mate and our group through. But I didn’t want him to hide from me anymore.

But I was just so bored. I needed to do something. Anything. Time for a different game.

With ease, I whipped both my knitting needles in Tomas’s direction. The strangled scream that met my ears just tickled me pink. Switching to a different, just as jaunty tune, I skipped my way over to where my needles had pinned Tomas to a tree. I waved merrily at him. The needles had sunk into both of his shoulders. They wouldn’t have kept the vampire pinned normally, but I’d just spent the last several hours beating the ever loving shit out of him every time I caught him. So he didn’t have a lot of energy left.

He was covered in cuts and bruises. His eyes were nearly swollen shut, and what I could still see were bloodshot. I was pretty sure I’d knocked out several teeth along the way, and his lips were ripped open and puffy. Blood dribbled from his ears, and his hair was a matted mess. There were rips and dirt littering Tomas’s outfit. He sure as fuck didn’t look like a king anymore.

“You’re lucky I have to keep you alive.” I pouted and crossed my arms over my chest. “You aren’t mine to kill.”

“I don’t even know who the fuck you are.” Tomas spat, blood splashing against the forest floor near my feet.

I rolled my eyes. I could respond with something cheesy, something about being his worst nightmare, but that's overused. Instead, I remained silent as I unraveled Ashera's finished scarf from my pocket. The yarn I'd used was soft, silky, and incredibly strong.

Flicking my gaze from the scarf in my hands to Tomas, I waged an inner war. This was a present for my mate, but if I didn't get any blood on it...

Nodding my head, I stepped closer to the vampire pinned to the tree and began wrapping the scarf around his neck. His eyes went wide and the scent of his panic had a manic grin forming on my face. I tugged the ends of the scarf, tightening the material against his flesh.

"Wha-What are you doing?" His body started to shake.

"I'm playing a new game since you suck at hiding and running," I stated as though he was stupid for missing the obvious.

"I-I can give you power!" he stammered.

I laughed, long and loud. "I am a fucking god, you piece of shit." I tightened the scarf more, starting to cut off his air supply. "I don't need more power."

"Y-You need something!"

"I really don't." The more I tightened the scarf, the more he shook. "I finally have everything I could ever need or want."

His face started to turn purple, and his eyes widened as much as they could in their swollen state. I giggled. He looked so pathetic.

My cock twitched. It had been far too long since I'd been buried in Ashera, and just the thought of how pleased she would be with me for catching Tomas had my mind wandering. I wanted to see my goddess's lips wrapped around the tip of my dick as she teased me. Because while she would be pleased with my hunting prowess, she would most likely chastise me for my brutality with my prisoner. Teasing me would be a just punishment.

Taking a deep inhale, I slammed my fist against the side of Tomas's head. He didn't need to be party to this, and I needed a release before I set about getting answers out of him. Ashera would be proud of me for that, too.

Perhaps I could ask that she reward me by letting me feast on her pussy as she sucked my cock. Five thousand years ago, she'd struggled to take all of me down her throat, but fuck it had always felt so good.

My pants fell to the forest floor with a soft rustle of the fabric, my mind already too caught up with thoughts of face fucking my mate to truly pay attention to my movements.

I spat in my hand before wrapping it around my cock, giving it a sharp, brutal pump. I moaned at the feel, picturing Ashera's mouth sucking me down her throat as I slid my tongue deep into her delicious, greedy cunt. I'd pin her hips to my face and make her take the pleasure I gave her over and over again. Fuck, I'd keep her pinned to my face for days—weeks even—just to I could relish every hitch of her breath. Every moan. Every shudder of her body. Every fucking inch of her.

Grunting, I set a fast pace with my hand, needing to get off almost as much as I needed to breathe. I may not have the dominant traits of a demon, but my hunger for my mate knew no bounds. I would take her in any and every way possible. I would see her bathed in my come, watching as it dripped from her golden skin.

I would knot myself so deep within her, she wouldn't know where I started and she ended. I'd stay buried deep for so long that she would round with my child—giving birth to a whole new generation of vicious predators who loved to knit.

The thought, so vivid in my mind, sent me tipping over the edge. I came with a low moan. It wasn't nearly as satisfying as coming in my mate's tight pussy, but I would make due for now. Hopefully I'd taken the edge off enough that I wouldn't get too excited and kill Tomas. Killing shit always got me so fucking hard. Especially if I was killing for my mate. I could show restraint, though. It would be difficult, but the reward was worth it.

I cleaned myself off and pulled up my pants. Cracking my neck, I stared at Tomas for a moment before conjuring some water with my magic. I sent the small wave directly at his face, startling the vampire awake with a sputter. I firmed up my grip on the scarf and pulled it tight again.

“Right. Let's begin.”



Ashera

AFTER FAR TOO MUCH DELIBERATION, we decided to have our generals march the army from Sahira—leaving a small contingent to keep the people safe—to the Void while my mates and I flew to find Daimon. And Tomas.

Excitement shivered through my body causing my heart to flutter. We finally had him. We were finally going to end him. We could finally start to bring peace, true peace, to Dunya.

But I couldn't help but feel as though this was really only the beginning. All of this had been set into motion by the gods, and Tomas was merely a pawn. In order for Dunya to be truly free, we were going to need to take on the Convocation...again. I was going to need to battle it out with Keres again.

Was I ready to do that? After everything Daimon told me, *could* I do that? She'd beaten us once, ripping my mate's soul into six shards. She'd killed me, and had planned to imprison my soul so I could never be reborn. She'd tied Daimon to the Void. What if...What if I gambled and lost again?

I shuddered. The consequences would be so much worse this time if we lost. I wasn't sure if I could handle that.

I glanced over at my mates. Thorne, Caspian, Ambrose, and Judah were riding on Winta's large back as she glided through the air several feet away from me. Malachi was soaring ahead, keeping a watchful eye. Jacobi was taking up the rear, keeping our backs safe. There was a piece of my soul missing—Daimon. They were all still in danger so long as Keres and her Convocation continued unchecked.

That's when I knew. We didn't have a choice but to take on Keres again. Daimon would never be free of the Void so long as she was alive. Similarly, Dunya wouldn't be safe from her mechanizations. Dunya was no longer producing slave labor for Jahmal, but Keres and the Convocation still had their claws in deep. I doubted they would just leave Dunya alone once Tomas was dead. Especially since I was now working toward unifying the kingdoms.

I couldn't be sure Keres had no knowledge of me. She may not have noticed me before, but there was no way she wouldn't try to find out who was behind the changes that were currently taking place. As much as I wanted to keep my mates safe and as far away from her as possible, the reality was, she would come for us eventually. It was better to bring the fight to her and end this now.

My resolve firmed the longer I thought about it. Daimon had briefly mentioned that the more mates I took, the more powerful I was. I had far more mates now than I'd had the first time I took on Keres. While I couldn't confirm it, I was probably more powerful than I was then as a result. I'd have to get Daimon to confirm.

I tugged on the mate bond, trying to determine where Daimon was. We were nearing the Forest of the Void, and he was close. I felt an answering tug and moved up to Malachi.

"I know where Daimon is," I shouted over the rush of the wind. "Follow me."

With a nod, we readjusted our positions. I led my mates around to a small clearing where the charred remains of what must have been a structure stood. We all landed, Winta shifting back and dressing. I glanced around, Daimon was close. I could lead us through the woods on foot from here. My wings vanished with a soft swish.

"What the fuck happened here?" Ambrose asked, kicking a piece of wood.

I shrugged. It wasn't important. "Daimon is this way."



SOBS RENT the air the further we trekked into the forest, followed shortly by maniacal laughter. It seemed Daimon had found something to torture. I shook my head. He was completely unhinged, and I loved it.

"Goddess!" He called. "Come see what I have for you!"

"A gift?" I called back. "Just for me!"

He giggled again.

I shot the others a look, and they were all shaking their heads with amused looks on their faces. None of us were surprised. It warmed my heart to see how quickly they'd all bonded, and how well they all knew each other despite not having been together long. It just reaffirmed that we were all meant to be together.

"The weird fuck is probably going to try to get you to eat someone's heart," Thorne grumbled.

Honestly? I wouldn't be surprised.

Once we made it to where Daimon's voice came from, we stepped through some trees to see that he had Tomas—or who I assumed was Tomas, since I'd never met the male—pinned to a tree. The god was playfully pulling on the ends of what appeared to be a scarf, which was wrapped so tightly around the vampire's neck, his face was turning purple.

"He's mine to kill," Ambrose snarled, stomping toward the pair.

"I know." Daimon smiled at him. "I was just playing with him until you could all get here."

If by playing, Daimon meant torturing...Tomas looked as though he'd been mauled by a wild animal. I was mildly impressed. It took a lot of self control to stop and know where the line between severely wounded and fatally wounded was. It was clear to us that Daimon was intimately familiar with where the line lay. I shouldn't be turned on by the fact, but I was.

Ambrose studied his father. His emotions shot through him so fast, it was difficult for me to pinpoint all of them. The most prominent, however, was rage. There was no doubt in my mind that Ambrose would take a great deal of pleasure from killing his father. Hell, I'd take a great deal of pleasure watching him kill his father.

Daimon slowly unraveled the scarf from around Tomas's neck. Upon looking closer, I realized that Tomas was pinned to the tree with Daimon's knitting needles. I had to fight back laughter at the sight. Of course, the slightly crazed god would use his precious knitting needles in some manner while tormenting our enemy. He gave Ambrose a nod and moved to stand beside me.

"For you, goddess." Daimon handed me the blue scarf he had been using to strangle Tomas with. "I made this for you."

I ran my hands along the soft, silky yarn as my lips tilted up in a smile. Daimon was eccentric, but I'd never had anyone make anything for me before. I folded it and packed it away for the time being. Then, I leaned up on my tiptoes to press a kiss to Daimon's cheek.

"Thank you. I love it."

"Of course you do." Daimon's chest puffed up with pride. "My knitting skills are second to none."



Ambrose

I FINALLY, *finally*, stood in front of my father. I wanted to savor this moment, bask in it. It almost didn't feel real. We'd been after him for so long that it was hard for me to believe we'd finally caught him. I was going to end him.

Dreams really do come true.

"S-son?" Tomas croaked out. His lips were ripped open, swollen and bloody from the beating Daimon had given him. His voice sounded hoarse from screaming. Fuck, he looked like he had one foot in the grave already.

It wasn't the state of him that sent fury boiling through every cell in my body. I didn't care that he was battered and bloody. I didn't care that he was so weak a pair of knitting needles could pin him to the tree at his back. No. What had me literally seeing red was that he had called me son. This piece of flaming shit was not my father, and I was most certainly not his fucking son.

I couldn't contain my laughter. It was a harsh, cruel sound that seemed to bounce off the trees around us, filling the air with my scorn. I shook my head. Gods, this was just too fucking perfect.

"Shut up," I snapped once I finished laughing. "I am not your son. You lost the privilege of being my father centuries ago."

He flinched at the violence within my tone, the promise of a slow and painful death. I couldn't hide my hatred for him any longer. I didn't need to. I was finally free.

"He confirmed he's been working with a high ranking Convocation official from Jahmal." The sound of Daimon's voice reminded me that we weren't alone. My mate and our group were here with me. "Based on his description of the conversations that they had, I can confirm he was working for Keres."

Despite his current state, Tomas still had the fucking balls to sputter. "A wo-woman?"

I wanted to rip his useless head from his worthless body. "Yes!" I roared. "A fucking woman. You were taking orders from a woman!"

He continued to sputter out sexist nonsense as I tilted my head to bring the others partially into view. "Was there anything else he had to say?"

"Nothing useful," Daimon replied. "Keres had promised him a way through the Void and a position of power in Jahmal. Dumb fucker didn't

even get the route he needs to take to get out of the Void alive.”

“So she used you and was going to just dispose of you.” I tsked as I returned my full attention back to Tomas. “Poetic justice. Used by a woman and then left to die.”

The pathetic excuse for a male in front of me went silent. He watched me from heavily swollen eyes as I started to pace before him. I retrieved the dagger I planned to kill him with, flashing it in front of his face.

“I’ve been waiting a long time to use this on you.” He flinched.

That’s when it dawned on me. My father, for all his plots and schemes, was a fucking coward. He never fought any of his own battles, choosing to send me or some other representative in his stead. His fake illness had been another way to hide from any potential negative consequences. Everything he’d done was so he would never need to pay the price for his actions if things went wrong. Others were always left burned instead.

I spat in his face. “You disgust me,” I snarled.

Fuck it. I wouldn’t toy with him. While he certainly deserved a very slow and painful death for everything he’d done, I just wanted to move on with my life. I didn’t want to give this weak, cowardly shit any more of my time or energy. He didn’t deserve it.

I lunged, fast and sure, embedding my knife smack in between Tomas’s eyes. I didn’t even bother to remove my knife or watch the life ebb from his body. Instead, I immediately yanked the knitting needles from his shoulders and turned to face Ashera and the others, a broad grin stretching across my face.

“Judah, take that fuckers soul. He should never be allowed to reincarnate.” The witch king nodded, stepping over to Tomas to do as I asked.

“I don’t want you to forget these.” I wiped the blood from the metal needles and held them out to Daimon.

Daimon studied my face for a moment before mirroring my smile. “I’ll have to teach you.”

I sucked in a breath. “I’d like that.”

Ashera huffed, bringing my gaze to her small, curvy frame. She had her arms crossed under her breasts, pushing them up in a way that made me want to lean down to lick them. She also had the most adorable glare on her face. She was so cute when she was mad.

“What is it, little queen?” I cooed.

She bristled. "Don't you 'little queen' me."

I raised an eyebrow in question, waiting for her to explain.

"If you're going to fawn over anyone, it should be me."

Oh. *Oh!*

I chuckled and pulled Ashera into my arms for a tight hug. My precious, little queen. Gods, how I loved her. She tilted her head back so she could continue glaring at me. I just shook my head and placed a light, teasing kiss on her nose. "You're so cute."

"I am not," she insisted. "I am fierce and terrifying."

"Adorably so," I agreed.

"Ambrose." The exasperation in her tone had me chuckling all over again.

"You *are* the only person I fawn over," I assured her.

Ashera pushed back to study my face for a moment before giving me a firm nod. "I'd better be."

"Let's move away from here," Daimon cut in. "The predators in the area will want to feast."

"Excellent." And with that, I left my father's lifeless body behind. It was good to be king.



Ashera

I COULD FEEL the difference in Ambrose as we made our way through the forest. A weight had been lifted off him, and our bond seemed to shimmer within me. I felt my lips lifting in a smile as I let his happiness radiate through me. I wasn't sure how Ambrose would feel once we killed his father. I would happily take the utter contentment that seeped through him now.

"Since it was Keres that threw all of this into motion, I assume we're going to go and end that bitch?" Winta growled from behind me. My other mates rumbled their agreement.

I sighed as I came to a stop. Tilting my head back so I could look up at the sky through the trees, I thought about our options. I'd made the decision on the flight here to confront Keres. But I'd done that without consulting all

of my mates. While it seemed as though they were on board with taking her down, we should really talk about all of our options. They needed to understand what we were walking into.

“Sher.” Malachi’s soft, firm voice had me moving my gaze from the sky to his face. He now stood in front of me, and his hands came up to frame my face. “We know.”

“Since when can you read minds?” I asked with a narrowing of my eyes.

“I just know you, Sher.” He tilted my head so he could rest his forehead against mine. His lips tipped up into a smile. “We know what we could lose with this. But we also know that what we could gain is worth it.”

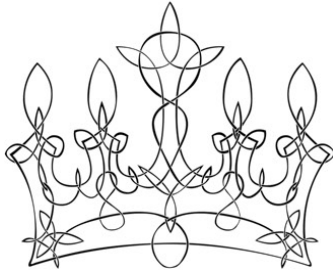
I huffed out a breath, my eyes searching his. “Are you sure?”

The affirmative rumbles that came from all around me were my answer. I rolled my eyes at my incubus mate before leaning in to press a quick kiss to his lips.

“Fine.” I pulled away enough to search out Daimon. “What do we need to do to get through the Void?”

“Well, we’re going to need to power up—all of us—as much as possible. We need to be at full capacity or the Void will kill us.” Oh. Great. Why was it always imminent death? Why couldn’t it be something like extreme secondhand embarrassment? Or an itch you couldn’t reach? Something torturous like that?

ASHERA



Despite being told that the Void could kill us if we weren't at full capacity, desire still swirled within my core, causing me to rub my thighs together in an attempt to ease the tension there. I smirked at my mates as I released a steady stream of pheromones into the air. I didn't need to, but I always loved when they turned a bit feral.

I breathed in deeply, enjoying the pulsing energy radiating from my mates. Having this many mates was an exhilarating feeling. There were so many of us to please and pleasure me, but also to be pleased. A succubus goddess like me could die happy knowing how much sexual tension I had to feed off of. It was a never ending supply, that was for sure.

Of course, there was a logical reason for what was about to happen – we all needed to be at our best if we were to travel through the Void. The easiest way to do that with so many was with sex on the forest floor, while some of us were bleeding. Being out in the open and bleeding would heighten the experience for everyone.

Caspian was the closest to me, reaching over to grab my neck and squeeze it gently. He spun me round to tip my head up to kiss me deeply, and I moaned into his mouth. Hands reached around behind me, gripping my breasts through my dress, and someone sank to their knees in front of me. I sank into the desire that permeated the air, taking deep pulls to feed my magic.

This must be what it felt like to be truly worshiped. To know someone would do whatever it took to please you. To fall to their knees in front of

you, their only goal making you feel wanted, cherished, and loved. Their main desire to unravel you with pleasure.

Caspian tightened his grip, and pulled away from me with a smile. I gasped for air, enjoying the dominance he was asserting. “Are you ready for this, dick slayer? Are you ready for all of us to fuck you at once?”

I gasped again, desire radiating from my core. I was instantly wet and dripping for my mates – all of them. From all around me there were purrs and growls, quiet moans of needs, and sighs of urgency. They wanted me, and I needed them. Yes. I was ready for all of them. I had a feeling it would take me to my limits, stretching them in a way I had never been challenged before, but I was ready. “Yes,” I moaned. “Yes, please.”

I heard a snap of fingers, and when I looked down over Caspian’s tight grip, I saw that we were all nude. Daimon’s fun trick, of course. I wouldn’t deny it definitely made things easier, and less awkward. Although, I was determined to tie that man up and make him watch me strip at a painfully slow pace at some point. See if he could handle me taking things at a languid pace, taking my time, and watching him squirm as I removed my clothing, piece by piece. It would probably kill him, and he would likely break the binds I had tied, but gods, wouldn’t it be delicious to watch him try?

Mal was on his knees before me, and he pushed my legs wider. “Open your legs for me, Sher. Let me see how wet you are for us.”

I widened my stance, and as Caspian bent to kiss me again, Mal slipped his fingers through my wet folds. I groaned and sagged into the arms that held me from behind as two fingers began to slowly tease me, thrusting into my aching pussy. Then, his mouth—was it his mouth? Was it another’s mouth?—began to suck at my clit, joining the pulsing fingers. Caspian’s grip was tight around my delicate skin, and the hands holding me up from behind began to massage my breasts, my nipples erect and desperate for more.

I rocked my hips into the mouth from below, moaning into Caspian’s mouth as my back arched. Gods, there was so much stimulation, and this was only the beginning. Just as soon as we began to develop a rhythm, I was pulled away from all of the fingers and mouths, spinning around to see Thorne. He had been the one holding me the entire time. Caspian and Mal growled, but Thorne only smirked. “I need to kiss you, kitten. I need to pump you full of my cum, and to hear you scream my name.” He bent,

kissing me deeply, and biting my bottom lip as he pulled away. “Gods, you’re delicious.”

I was pulled away again, spinning around to see Daimon falling to his knees in front of me. “Someone hold on to her. I need to devour this pussy.” Arms wrapped around me from behind again—dark, feminine arms. *Winta*.

“I can’t wait to watch him eat you out, precious. And after they’ve all had their fun with you, I’ll clean you up with my tongue,” she whispered.

Gods. I was going to lose my mind. As Winta held me up, Daimon pulled one of my legs up and onto his shoulder, diving between my legs. I couldn’t stop the cries and moans escaping from my lips as he began to alternate between fucking me with his tongue, and swirling and sucking my clit into his mouth. He stopped to grin up at me—that feral, unhinged grin that did things to me it shouldn’t. “I could happily eat you out for the rest of my life.” He dove back in again, and I rocked my hips against his assault, Winta holding me upright. Then my head was being pulled to the side, fangs running down my neck, making me shiver against the sudden change of pace.

“You look so pretty coming on your god’s tongue, little queen. I bet you’d look even prettier as I came on yours,” Ambrose murmured. He sank his teeth into my neck, beginning to draw my blood. The combination of Daimon eating me out, and Ambrose drinking my lifeblood made me cry out in ecstasy.

“Gods!” I screamed. “Gods, it’s too much!”

Winta nuzzled her mouth against my ear, biting down gently on my earlobe, a complete contrast to the feelings elsewhere. Where my males were all hard edges and rough strokes, my dragon was sleek lines and soft curves. “It’s just enough, precious. Just enough for my beautiful queen. Gods, you should see yourself right now, Ashera.”

“Come on his tongue, kitten.” Thorne’s voice was deep and commanding, and I let the feelings take over as Ambrose pulled on my neck, and Daimon sucked at my clit. “Show me how badly you want him to taste you.”

“Gods!” I screamed as I came, my pussy trembling around Daimon’s tongue, and Ambrose groaning at my neck.

He pulled away with a blood stained smile. “Your blood tastes even sweeter when you come.”

I groaned as Daimon licked me through the aftershocks, and Winta—stroking silky hands down my body—whispering sweet nothings into my ear. “You did so good, precious. So good for your mates.”

Daimon moaned as he sucked my clit into his mouth one last time, and my pussy pulsed in his mouth. I was so distracted by the feel of Daimon’s lips as he dragged them from my clit, I almost didn’t feel the soft phantom touch that swirled around the entrance to my pussy.

It was light at first, barely there, but with each swipe, the pressure grew. I was still sensitive from my orgasm so each stroke had me shuddering. My gaze flew to Daimon, who released a dark chuckle as he shook his head. It wasn’t him. My eyes darted around until they landed on my newest mate.

Sweet, Judah.

The markings on his body glowed. A sly smile played at his lips as he watched me with a heated intensity that stole my breath. Winta took that moment to slide her hands to my breasts, her nimble fingers swirling around my nipples, but not giving me the touch I yearned for.

“Do you know what else will make her feral for us?” Malachi’s husky whisper had my skin tingling.

The large demon pulled the smaller witch king over before dropping to his knees. My mouth went dry. The magic that was playing with my pussy stuttered for a moment before resuming. Mal pushed Judah’s pants to the ground, palming his dick as he did.

Shooting me a wink, Malachi turned back to his prize and slid the witch king’s cock down his throat. There was no preamble, and my pussy clenched—making me painfully aware that I was very empty right now.

I moaned. Mal deep throating Judah without warning was just...

“Fuck,” Judah hissed out, the heat in his eyes flaring as they held my hooded gaze. His hands went to bury themselves in the incubus’s hair, causing strands to fall from the bun there. Gods, I loved a rumpled Malachi. “Gods, that’s good.”

Winta picked that moment to tweak my nipples, and the faint traces of magic that had been lazily playing with the soft, wet heat of me changed. It became more demanding and focused around my clit. My eyes fluttered, but I refused to pull my gaze from Judah, who was still staring intently at me as Malachi slurped on his dick.

Caspian got on his back before me. “Bring her here, Winta.”

They moved me so I sank to my knees above Caspian. My fae held my hips so I couldn't sink down on his cock while the others got into position.

Winta crooked a finger at Jacobi as she sank to her hands and knees beside me, our skin brushing. My angel king smiled sweetly at her as he took to his knees behind her, grabbing hold of her hips. I moaned as Jacobi sank his cock slowly into Winta. The sight was far more erotic than I thought it would be. Especially when Winta's eyes slid closed and she let out a low groan of pleasure.

Daimon, gripping Ambrose by his hair, shoved the vampire so he was also on his hands and knees on my other side, just as close as Winta and Jacobi. The god had his knitting needles in his other hand. My lips twitched at the sight. Of course, he was going to bring those to an orgy. I shouldn't have been surprised.

Thorne slid down in front of me, his cock dangling right in my face. I glanced up at him and licked my lips, more than ready to have the taste of him on my tongue. But just as I was leaning in to close my lips around him, a solid slap to my ass had my head whipping around.

Malachi had repositioned himself and was kneeling behind me, his cock glistening with lube. Judah was standing next to him. Oh gods.

"Yes," the word stretched out in a pleased hiss.

All of my mates would be able to touch me in some way. Even Judah could put a hand on my ass if he wanted to, though his magic was still swirling around my clit with sweet strokes that kept me dripping all over Caspian.

A hiss had my head turning to Ambrose and Daimon. The god had impaled himself in Ambrose's ass and had also stabbed a knitting needle in the vampire's shoulder. Princess shuddered as blood oozed out of the wound and Daimon lapped it up like a kitten with milk.

I was so distracted by the sight, I didn't sense Malachi and Caspian moving until they were both thrusting up and into me. The brush of a soft tail turning my head forward, had me ripping my gaze from the stunning bloodbath.

"Good girl, kitten," Thorne rumbled as his tail brushed lovingly down my cheek. "Now open those delicious lips so I can fuck your face."

Too caught up in the sexual energy swirling around us, the scent of blood, the feel of my mates in and around my body, their desires and pleasure soaring through my empathic gift and the bond, I was helpless to

do anything other than obey. Thorne's tail wrapped tightly around my neck and his claws sank into my hair. Then he was thrusting into my mouth and down my throat.

My eyes fluttered closed. My focus went to the sounds around me. Judah cursing softly and telling Mal to suck harder. Caspian grunting as he thrust up into my aching pussy. Winta whimpering in encouragement to Jacobi who was moaning in time with his thrusts. Daimon slurping up Ambrose's blood as the vampire begged him to keep stabbing him with the knitting needles.

"Fuck me, daddy," Ambrose moaned. "Cut me with your needles again."

"That's right," –Daimon slammed his other needle into Ambrose, – "I'm your fucking daddy now."

The sound of flesh slapping against flesh. Soft pants. Moans. Groans.

Pleasure flooded me, and I attempted to shove it all back to my mates down our bonds, wanting us all to unravel completely. All of my mates were touching me in some way, and it was pure ecstasy. This was everything I could have ever wanted. Everything I needed. All of us getting lost in pleasure together.

"Wait," I panted out after I'd pulled away from Thorne. Everyone stopped moving.

"I want you all to come on me," I gasped. My gaze met Winta's. "Once Thorne comes, please come on my face."

Winta moaned and nodded her head. With a wicked gleam in her eyes, her tail grew. My eyes widened. What was she going to do with that?

Now that I'd made my request, bodies started moving again. The wet slap that echoed throughout the forest around us had my breath hitching. Thorne took advantage of that and thrust deep down my throat again. I moaned around his cock causing him to snarl.

My eyes rolled into the back of my head when I felt Winta's tail start to work its way inside my pussy with Caspian's cock. Gods. I was so full. I clenched down around them at the same time Mal slammed his cock deep into my ass, and Thorne held my face against his hips. I felt so amazing.

Daimon's hand snapped out and grabbed my arm, pulling it close to him so he could sink his teeth into me. I came with a muffled scream around Thorne's dick. My orgasm was dragged out as my mates continued to fuck

me while Daimon took drag after drag of my blood. God, having your mate drink your blood while you were coming was an out of body experience.

“Again, kitten,” Thorne demanded. “Come again.” My eyes snapped open and my gaze connected with his. He gave me a hard thrust as a reward, his tail tightening further around my neck.

Judah’s magic now swirled around my nipples as well as my clit. Caspian slapped my ass. Once on one side. Twice on the other.

“Dick slayer, you are fucking drenched.” Caspian moaned, his eyes fluttering closed. “So fucking tight and wet.”

“I’m not going to last long,” Jacobi rumbled. I knew he could feel what everyone else felt. It was magnified in him. I was surprised he’d lasted this long, honestly.

“Our queen wants your cum, angel,” Winta said with a smile. “You’d best give it to her.”

Jacobi pulled himself out of Winta, his cock glistening. Frustration rolled through me at the fact that I couldn’t lick him clean because I had Thorne in my mouth. The next time one of them fucked my dragon, I wanted to lick them both clean.

With a few quick jerks on his cock, Jacobi came with a low grunt across my back, his body shuddering. I loved the feel of the warm liquid as it splattered my skin. It made me feel deliciously dirty and powerful.

Thorne, without warning, clamped his tail around my neck so hard my vision started to go dark. I didn’t panic, knowing my mate would never hurt me. The feeling actually heightened my pleasure, and I came again, just as Thorne spilled himself down my throat. I swallowed all of it, sucking him clean as he pulled out.

Winta then positioned herself in front of me. I pulled my arm back from Daimon so I could use both hands to get to her pussy—trusting my mates to keep me in position as I did so. I then buried my face against Winta, swirling my tongue around her clit, moaning at the taste of her as it mingled with Thorne’s release in my mouth.

“Gods! Fuck!” Judah came gasping. The hot splash of him against my ass had me groaning and thrusting back against Malachi.

Winta and I came together. I lapped at her pussy with a pleased hum, savoring her taste on my tongue and prolonging her orgasm. She finally collapsed to the ground beside Thorne and Jacobi. The three of them were sucking in air with harsh breaths that had their chests heaving. Judah went

over to the trio and lowered himself down, too. He was covered in sweat, and his markings were still glowing.

Malachi was kneading my ass, thrusting into me at a furious pace that had my breasts bouncing in Caspian's face—much to the fae's delight. "I love being buried balls deep in you, little slut. I don't even care where."

Both Daimon and Ambrose lunged up. They were jerking each other off. Fuck. I came again, screaming unintelligibly as I did.

"Open your mouth, goddess," Daimon demanded. "I'm going to come on your tongue."

I quickly did as I was told. Daimon came with a roar, and I quickly lapped up his sweet cum. Gods, I wanted more. I wanted all of them.

Ambrose was next, stroking his cock as he shoved Daimon out of the way. "Lift your face to me, little queen. I want to cover your face in my cum."

I tipped my head up as much as I could, and Ambrose shattered with a cry of my name, his release coating my face. I licked around my lips, tasting as much of him as I could. I moaned and sighed, pushing back into Mal's thrusts, and he groaned. "Fuck me, little slut. I'm going to cum all over this pretty little back of yours."

"Do it, please," I moaned. "Fuck, please."

He pulled out of my ass with a vicious roar, and I felt his cum splatter onto my back, joining my other mates'. "Gods, you look so good painted in my cum."

The only one left now was Caspian, still thrusting away with a smirk underneath me. "You ready for me, dick slayer? Because I want to be the only one to paint those perfect tits of yours."

My only response was a groan, and he pulled out of me, gently pushing me onto my back as he jerked himself off.

"Get ready, dick slayer."

I let my eyes flutter closed—sated and content—as Caspian sighed my name and came all over my stomach and breasts. He collapsed on top of me, my other mates eventually coming to lay all around us. Everyone wanted to touch me in some way, and I knew the feeling because I needed to touch all of them as well.

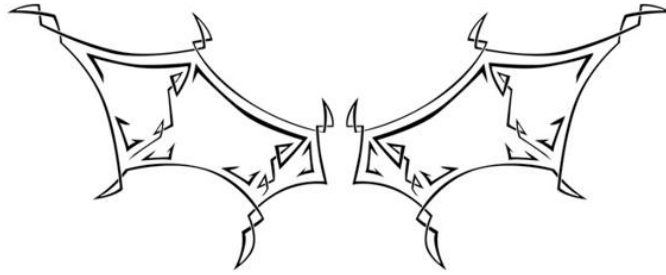
The air around us was electrically charged. I began to pull off the post orgy feelings, feeding myself more, and could feel all my mates doing the same. Mal was feeding off the sexual energy, Jacobi off the immense

feelings. Caspian was pulling from the earth beneath him. Daimon and Ambrose were contentedly full from the blood they had sipped on. Judah was full from his earlier feed. Everyone was happy and at peace – for a moment at least. Maybe this would be what it would feel like every day once we defeated Keres.

A life lived in peace. I wasn't sure I knew what that felt like. But I wanted to find out.

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MALACHI



It took us a while to pick ourselves up after that orgy. We were all sweaty and panting. Our bodies ached pleasantly. We also knew that once we got up, the perceived peace that had fallen over our group would shatter. After fighting so hard for so long, we had earned a small moment of peace. A moment to revel in our bonds and each other.

But we eventually pried ourselves from the comforting warmth that came with being wrapped in a pile of bodies. It was hard to watch Ashera clean herself off. She looked amazing covered in cum, hair mussed, and skin flushed. It made me want to fuck her all over again. And again.

Unfortunately, we had one last mission. So we cleaned ourselves off, got dressed, checked our provisions, drank some water, and headed off toward the Void.

I wasn't sure what was going to come next for us, but I was fairly certain we were ready for anything. We all had our fill from our time with Ashera and each other. If the energy in the group was anything to go by, there was nothing that could stop us. Which was good, because we were about to go head on with a goddess.

It was just us. Two shifters, a vampire, a fae, a witch, an angel, a demon, and two gods. No armies to back us up. No safety net to save our ass if everything fell apart at the last minute. All we had to rely on was each other, and we had to hope that was enough.

Daimon had said he knew the way through the Void, and that we needed to trust him. The guy was a god, but he also had a screw or two loose, so I wasn't sure if we would be walking into an absolute shit show, or how we

were going to cross over. At the end of the day, he was the only one who knew the way, and we had no other option.

Ashera and Daimon led the way through the forest, everyone following behind them. There was another feeling winding through the group, one that rippled through the anticipation of something new, so strong I didn't need to be an angel to feel it. It felt like nervousness, which I could completely understand. Before every battle during the rebellion I would make myself sick with nerves, and this was about to be the biggest battle of my life. There was a strong likelihood none of us would survive this. I hadn't said as much to Sher, but I was sure she knew what was at stake. High risk, high reward, right?

Ambrose trotted along just ahead of me with a goofy smile that had been plastered on his face since Tomas's death. I rolled my eyes, catching up to him. I was glad everything was all well and good in the vampire's little world, but we still had some loose ends to tie up.

I grabbed the back of Ambrose's coat, pulling him back to walk next to me. "We need to talk, bloodsucker."

Ambrose rolled his eyes, but didn't run away. "Please don't ruin my mood, bat fuck. I'm in an ever so good one."

I shook my head. "No. This is important. Your father is dead, and that makes you king of Masas. If you want a fresh start for everything, and everyone, you have some things to atone for first. You fucked up earlier, killing Bradford in cold blood."

The vampire's expression grew somber. The rest of the group was talking quietly amongst themselves, but I knew if they really wanted to hear what was going on they would have no trouble doing so. "I know. I...I wasn't myself, Mal. Yeah, I might have pulled a stunt like that when I was younger. But since Ashera, gods no. I'm still horrified by it myself. I don't know what I was thinking. I'm so sorry."

I nodded. I understood what he meant. Ambrose had been a completely different person when we first met him, and although he wasn't perfect, he wasn't a monster either. "It's not me you have to apologize to. Bradford was one of Thorne and Winta's people. You'll have to seek their forgiveness, and Bradford's family's as well. Only then can you ever really start over."

Ambrose groaned. "Fuck, you're telling me I have to apologize to the fucking cat? He's never going to forgive me."

From ahead of us, I could hear Winta's giggle, and I knew for sure the group was listening. I had to hold back my smile. "Look, Ambrose, do you feel bad for what you did?"

"Yes." When he looked at me, I saw nothing but honesty in his eyes. "I feel horrible. Bradford didn't deserve what I did to him."

"And do you want to make things right?" I cocked my head to the side, watching him closely for any signs of falseness, but I found nothing.

"Absolutely." He swung his head vehemently. "I want to make Ashera proud. I want to be a king she'd want to see by her side, not a king she's ashamed of."

"Then you know what you have to do." I tipped my head toward Thorne and Winta.

Ambrose groaned. "Fuck's sake. This is my worst nightmare."

"Go. Now. Before we reach the Void."

He rolled his eyes at me, but caught up with Thorne.

One day this guy was going to be the death of me. Hopefully that day was a long, long time away.



Thorne

I COULD HEAR Malachi and Ambrose's quiet conversation, and I was doing my absolute best not to laugh. It was quite clear that Ambrose didn't want to apologize to me. Not that he didn't want to apologize. I was fairly sure he felt terrible for Bradford's death, but he didn't want to apologize to me. He knew after the way he treated me before I'd finalized the bond with Ashera could come back to bite him in the ass. He wasn't *that* stupid.

This was probably his worst nightmare. But still, he groaned, and his footsteps quickly caught up with where Winta and I were walking close behind Ashera and Daimon.

"Thorne?" he muttered. "Can we talk?"

I had to fight back a grin. I had a choice. I could either make it easy for him, instantly accept his apology, and tell him exactly what he needed to do to make amends according to the traditions of Qamar, or I could let him suffer. I had a suspicion that Winta would let him off easy. After all, he

hadn't clammed her damn at every turn. Fucking cock-blocking prick. Revenge was best served well prepared.

Decisions, decisions.

I couldn't stop myself from dragging it out just a little bit longer. It wasn't like he hadn't earned it or anything. Winta was remaining silent, letting this all play out how I wanted it. I think she knew I wanted a little payback for the way I'd been treated. "Talk about what?"

Ambrose swore under his breath. Did he really think I was going to make this easy for him? Poor, silly, little princess. "About, you know... Bradford." His voice grew quieter. Damn, he must have actually felt terrible.

"What about him?" I kept my voice gruff. While I was surprised at the emotion in the vampire's tone, that wouldn't sway me. Forgiveness hinged on what he said next. If he was insincere, he was going to catch hell.

He took a deep breath in, and then spoke all in a rush, as if he had been holding in the words for a decade. "I feel terrible about what happened to Bradford. I know it isn't an excuse, but I really wasn't in the right frame of mind. I don't think I was thinking, period. I had lost myself to my bloodlust, and someone died. I'm not sure I can ever forgive myself for that. I promised myself when I mated Ashera that I would be better. Killing someone senselessly wasn't being better. I hope you and Winta can eventually forgive me for taking one of your own away, and I hope I can find some way to honor Bradford in a way he would've appreciated. I would also like to give reparations to his family."

Damn. That was some apology. I was stuck between a rock and a hard place. Even though I didn't want to forgive Ambrose – a death was a death after all and a good man had lost his life because of his actions. I also knew what it was like to lose yourself to the beast within. Ambrose was a prick, there was no getting around that, but he didn't seem to be the kind of prick who killed indiscriminately.

I'd done things–killed people–while lost to my beast. While not entirely the same as being lost to bloodlust, it wasn't entirely different either. Both were states of heightened emotion. Both took over our rational thoughts. Both could make us do things we wouldn't otherwise do.

"I..." Ambrose ran his hand through his hair and ducked his head to study the ground. "I can't exactly rationalize my state of mind. I think that I

saw Bradford with Ashera and saw a threat to my mate. I don't know. It's not an excuse. I know that. But I think that's what happened.

"We don't have bloodlust," Winta said quietly. She was studying Ambrose's profile intently when she continued, "But if we think our mate is threatened, our animal sides can take over. They can also take over during a battle, and it becomes hard to tell friend from foe."

Ambrose turned his attention to Qamar's queen. The emotion shimmering in his blood-red eyes told me how much he regretted what had happened. He felt far more about this than he was letting on.

"While Bradford was one of our soldiers, it isn't our place, not really, to forgive you. That lies with his family." Winta turned to look at me. "I don't speak for Thorne, but I absolve you of any wrongdoing as much as I'm able. I can't say that I wouldn't have done the same if our roles were reversed."

That was the crux of the issue, wasn't it? Would I have done anything differently if I was lost to my animal and thought that there was a threat to my mate? I'd seen Ambrose when he was balls deep in bloodlust. There had been no reasoning with him.

I tried to look at his actions in a different light. He killed Bradford—horrifically—and then immediately went to connect with Ashera. It was possible that what rational thought he could muster had told him to confirm that his mate was alive, and was still his.

I groaned internally. Bradford was one of my men. He had been my responsibility, and I was ultimately going to be the one to tell his family that he was dead when we made it back to Qamar. I had always made a point of meeting with each fallen soldier's family individually. I couldn't be sure how his mate would react, though I was sure she'd felt the mate bond sever with his death. But to know that he'd been killed by an ally? The whole situation was a clusterfuck.

And I wasn't about to make it worse.

Releasing a drawn out sigh, I rubbed my temples. "Look, you're a royal prick of epic proportions." I had to suppress a chuckle when he nodded in agreement. "But Winta is right. And, honestly, there's no point in me holding this against you. It could corrode the group from within, and I just don't want to live like that."

Ambrose's shoulders sagged a bit with relief. "How can I make reparations?"

“That’s going to be up to his mate,” I replied. An evil grin spread across my face. “His *pregnant* mate.”

“Oh fuck.” Ambrose went paler than usual, his eyes rounding in horror. “P-pregnant?”

“Yup. *Very* pregnant.” I was sure that Bradford’s mate would have this vampire’s balls in an iron fist. It was going to be great.

“Everyone.” Daimon’s voice boomed around us, louder than I would have expected.

That was what made me feel it. The hairs on the back of my neck and my arms stood on end. My tiger started pacing restlessly inside me, unsettled and anxious. It was quiet in this part of the forest. Far too fucking quiet. There was something inside me screaming at me to turn around. I shouldn’t be here.

“That’s the Void,” Daimon explained. I looked around and noticed that everyone—aside from Ashera and Daimon—was having the same reaction. “There are a few things you should know. The Void is sentient. The crotchety bitch only draws people in if she’s hungry. Aside from that, she’ll make it feel like you want to run far and fast in the other direction. Be thankful that she’s full right now.

“We needed to be at full strength to get through because of how she feeds. The Void pulls magic, or the life force from humans, to power her own magic. So even though we won’t be using any magic while we’re in the Void, she’s going to be sucking us dry.”

“Awesome,” Ambrose mumbled.

“The trip through the Void can take minutes or it can take days. It depends on how finicky the Void is feeling. I’d like to say that we’ll be out quickly after we enter, but I can’t promise that.” He looked down at Ashera and worry shimmered in his gaze. “But I can promise that we’ll all make it through. I’m not going to lose a single fucking one of you.”

Ashera smiled up at him, leaning up on her tiptoes to press a light kiss to his lips. The god’s words didn’t reassure me the way I was sure he meant them to. Given what I felt from the Void? She didn’t want us near her.



Daimon

WHEN ASHERA PRESSED a light kiss to my lips, I couldn't stop myself from deepening it. I needed more of her, to know she was really still here. So I pulled her away from the others, needing this last moment with her more than I needed air.

I knew the Void was affecting everyone other than Ashera and myself. I could see it in the way they paced, and the way their emotions were jumping all over the place. But there was a different emotion bubbling up deep within my core. An emotion I had felt many times before, and never wanted to feel again. I was terrified of losing Ashera again.

The last time we had stepped through the Void together, I had lost her for centuries. I couldn't handle that again. I wouldn't survive it. Even if I did physically, my mind definitely wouldn't. I needed her to know I wasn't about to let her go easily – I would fight to keep her by my side no matter what was thrown at us by the Void. I bent down, swooping my arms underneath her lower back, and laying her gently down on the forest floor.

I knew we should make our move, and head through the Void. But I needed one last moment with her. One more time buried deep inside her perfect pussy. The Void and Keres could wait that long, couldn't they?

Ashera must have felt it too, because she locked gazes with me for a second, a quiet smile crossing her face, and then pulled up her dress and her cloak. She hiked them above her hips, and I immediately pulled my pants down, freeing my already hard cock. Gods, I needed to be inside her. I never wanted to leave.

From the corner of my thoughts, another emotion was coming through. *Winta*. Even though she herself hadn't lost Ashera before, she was the reincarnated soul of the female who had lost Ashera twice. So while the rest of the group was nervous about losing their mate, crossing through the unknown – as they should be – Winta was fearful for another reason altogether. She had already felt the pain of losing Ashera before, and the memories of that were haunting her. I stopped just before I buried myself inside her. "Call Winta over, goddess."

Ashera moaned quietly, and nodded. "Winta?" she asked. "Where are you?"

"Here, precious." It only took a moment before Winta joined us, her need and desire flooding me instantly. She needed this as much as I did.

Ashera knew it too. "Sit on my face," she commanded. "Do it now."

“We don’t have a lot of time,” I growled at both of them. “So we’ll have to be quick. I can’t knot you this time”

Winta shucked off her clothes, straddling Ashera’s face in seconds. As soon as I saw my perfect little goddess open her mouth, and begin to lick Winta’s pussy, I pushed inside Ashera’s wet heat.

“Perfect,” I groaned. “You’re so fucking perfect, goddess.”

Ashera’s pussy clenched and tightened around me as I thrust into her, warming her up for what was to come. I knew my other side would take over in a minute, the one that demanded I claim her and fuck her so she remembered she was mine no matter what lifetime she was in. But I could give her a few moments without that side in control. Winta was moaning, riding Ashera’s face, and the image of it was so godsdamn hot it made me moan.

I could feel Ashera’s desperation for me to fuck her harder, and Winta’s need to come, and that was what finally made me snap. I roared and began to fuck Ashera for all she was worth, rocking her face onto Winta’s pussy. The two women were crying out and moaning as I pistoned my hips deeper and harder.

Ashera was mine. Always. Forever. There was no doubting it. One day her belly would swell with our child, filled with my seed. No one could ever doubt we were meant to be. Hadn’t I found her again after all these years? If that wasn’t a miracle, I didn’t know what was. I moaned and thrust harder. Ashera’s pussy was fluttering around me, and I knew she was close. I could feel Winta’s orgasm too, just outside my immediate consciousness. Close by, Ashera’s other mates were touching themselves, stroking themselves to release, but they didn’t interrupt. Something must have told them this was different. That the three of us needed this.

“Come for me, goddess. Come for your mate,” I rumbled. I slipped my hand between us, finding her swollen clit, and began to swirl it around in my fingers. That was all it took. At the same time Ashera cried out my name around Winta’s pussy, Winta came on Ashera’s tongue.

Gods, I wasn’t sure there was anything sexier than sharing my mate with her other mates. Ashera’s orgasm rocked me closer to mine, and I threw myself over the edge of oblivion, screaming out her name as I pumped her full of my seed.

The three of us lay there for a moment, panting and sighing, content. But we didn’t have much time to enjoy it, because we had important things

to do. The Void waited for us.

I got to my feet, straightening my clothes, and helped Winta and Ashera to their feet as well. Once Winta was dressed, I turned and addressed the group as if I hadn't just been balls deep in Ashera only moments before. "Are we ready?"

Everyone nodded, and nervous glances were shared. I understood the fear in the unknown.

"What are we waiting for then? Stay close."

I squeezed Ashera's hand, and stepped into the pulsing air of the Void. Stepping into the Void was like welcoming a friend. A friend you didn't like, or want, but knew you had to play nice with. I didn't enjoy playing nice with friends like that, but in this case it had to be done. There was little visibility in the air around me, swirling silver dust coated the entire Void, disorientating any who walked in. You could walk for weeks and end up right back where you started if you weren't careful. Or if you weren't me.

"Honey, I'm home!" I called. The Void thrummed around me, annoyed by my intrusion, but not kicking me out yet. She wasn't going to be happy I brought friends.

One by one, the rest of the group popped through into the Void. I couldn't make out distinct features through the blowing dust, but I could see the shapes of each of them. I counted to make sure all of my baby chicks had gotten through, and then screamed to be heard over the blowing wind. "Let's go! If you get lost....don't. Just don't get lost." I took a step toward Jahmal. Toward Keres. I didn't look back to make sure everyone was following. I had to trust that they all knew what to do.

I had learned to ignore the feelings the Void sent my way. The Void held onto every soul that had walked through its belly, and you felt them all at once. There was my fear the first time I had crossed over with Ashera. There was the nervous excitement of a young man who had gotten lost centuries ago. The mourning of a young widow—come to the Void to rid herself of her suffering.

So many emotions swirled around me, and I had to shut them all out. I tried to push out my energy, making sure I was protecting everyone in the mate group as well. The sensations could easily become overwhelming. Hell, I was lucky I had managed to keep my sanity living so close to it for all those years, but not everyone was my level of fabulous.

I took my time, stepping carefully through the blowing debris, swirling souls spinning around me. Another step closer to Keres. Another step closer to freeing Ashera. That was what made it all worth it.

Another step, and another. I tried to feel and make sure everyone was still around me, but there were too many emotions. I couldn't see through them. I just had to hope for the best.

One more step, and then a second. And a third. Then there was daylight.

I looked up to the sky, blue and cloudless, and eternally bright. I was no longer in my forest. I was in the most beautiful meadow I had ever seen in my life, dotted with golden flowers. Maybe it wasn't more beautiful than Dunya, or maybe I had just spent so much time away from my home I had forgotten. I had made it through. I turned and smiled at the Void. "Thanks, sweetheart. I knew you still loved me." I blew her a kiss, and I could've sworn she grunted back.

I sat in the field and waited for the others to arrive. While I waited, I began to create a crown with the golden flowers growing everywhere. I needed something to do with my hands.

The first to arrive was Mal, with Ambrose close behind. Then Winta and Thorne, with Caspian nearly falling out on top of them. Judah and Jacobi popped out looking disoriented, but alive. Now we were just waiting for one. Everyone was quiet as we waited.

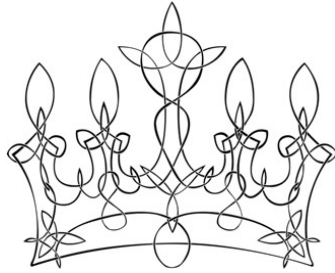
Please, please let her be okay, I thought. Please. I'll give anything.

The minutes passed, and the group grew more somber. I continued weaving my crown, holding out hope. Right before I gave up entirely, wanting to toss my crown back at the Void and take back my thanks, she arrived.

Ashera stumbled out, looking as beautiful as ever. She looked around at all of us, and then met my gaze. "Are we here? Did we make it?"

I stepped closer to her, placing my flower crown on her golden head. "Welcome to Jahmal. The land of the gods."

ASHERA



I touched the delicate flower crown on my head, before taking a moment to look around. We had made it through the Void. I had gotten disorientated the last little bit, voices calling me every which way. I could've sworn I heard Visa, and had wandered toward the sound. Then I realized it was just the Void tricking me, leading me even deeper into her swirling belly. By the time I turned around, everyone had gone, and I was forced to find my own way out. I had closed my eyes, and let my heart lead me. I had lived here before, hadn't I? Surely it would just be a matter of finding my way home. And somehow, it worked.

We were standing on the edge of the Void, staring out on Jahmal. I wasn't sure what I'd expected. Maybe something that screamed 'gods live here'? But what was in front of me looked very much like Dunya. Rolling hills with flowers, forests, and some mountains in the distance. It all appeared so...normal.

Was I disappointed? Given how the gods were talked about in Dunya, I had assumed there would be more. This was a mild let down.

"I haven't had many reasons to come back here over the last five thousand years," Daimon said as he moved to my side. He wrapped an arm around my shoulders and tugged me closer to him. "It hasn't changed much since our rebellion."

I glanced up at him. His brows were furrowed, and his eyes were hard as he stared out at the landscape before us. He was disgusted and angry, which was understandable. Given everything he'd been through, I would

feel the same in his shoes. I was sure being here didn't bring up positive memories either. I would have to change that.

I tangled my fingers with his, squeezing them gently. His head didn't move, but his eyes darted over to me and the edges of his mouth tipped into a soft smile. A rush of love, so massive and profound, flooded me. He was entirely devoted to me. In his mind, there was no question, no doubt. He was mine, and I was his. It was that simple. The thought had me bringing his hand up to my mouth so I could press a reverent kiss to his palm.

"What's the plan?" Malachi asked as he stepped up to my other side. I heard the rustle of clothes as the rest of my mates gathered as close as they could. "We don't exactly have an army this time around."

Daimon glanced over at the incubus. "No. We don't. But I don't think we're going to need one."

I pulled away from him, confused. "What?"

"After what happened, the Convocation—while siding with Keres—felt uneasy about how much power she appeared to have. Her position wasn't meant to be that of dictator. The head of the Convocation is meant to be the overarching voice of guidance, compassion, and reason. So there is now a magically binding law that will allow challengers to Keres's position. I'd told you before that we're a relatively peaceful people, and that was true.

"Given the powers we wield, we're well aware that we could destroy this world and everyone on it very easily. So we live simple lives and maintain peace as much as possible. Keres...Something is off with her. We do have our fair share of people with thoughts of grandeur, but they don't usually get far before they're stopped. Keres laid low and played it smart. We're still a peaceful race, but Keres has far more power than she should."

"No one has tried to challenge her?" I asked. That seemed...strange. Why wouldn't someone try to challenge the dictator?

"Oh they have," Daimon chuckled. "In order to qualify for the position, you need to first be seated on the Convocation. It used to be that the most powerful individual sat on the seat until they retired or passed away. Keres knew that you were more powerful than she was. She also knew that the former head of the Convocation was planning to retire as he was old and wanted to live his last years in peace.

"She had you removed from the Convocation before the former head retired. Those that had opposed removing you from the Convocation were slowly eased out of their positions. She'd only allowed me and Jareth to

stay in the hopes that she could either sway us to her side or control you through us. Neither worked.

“But after our rebellion, there were several individuals who had felt that Keres had gone too far. Your punishment, in particular, left many feeling as though Keres had truly gone mad. She had tried to oppose the challenge law going into effect, but there were too many on the Convocation who voted for it, so she was powerless to stop it. Which meant that she then faced challenge after challenge.”

“But she won,” I murmured, understanding dawning.

“But she won, often through cheating,” Daimon confirmed. “Now she’s packed the Convocation with her allies. No one would dare challenge her reign now.”

“Except me.” Daimon nodded. “But wait. You said that in order to qualify for the position, I had to be seated on the Convocation first. I’m not a member of the Convocation.”

The god wagged his finger in my face. “That was before the challenge law was enacted. I’ve studied the wording since it was implemented. You don’t need to be on the Convocation to challenge her. People have just assumed it. It specifically states that any person of Jahmal who believes themselves powerful enough can challenge for the position. Many people just assume that implies a Convocation member since they tend to be the most powerful of our kind. Keres has also spread lies to reinforce this belief”

“Holy shit,” I murmured.

“Holy shit, indeed, goddess.” Daimon beamed at me. “We’re about to go take back everything that’s ever been taken from you.”



DARKNESS HAD FALLEN SHORTLY after we emerged from the Void. It hadn’t taken much convincing for everyone to agree to camp out rather than heading right to the Convocation’s compound. We were all a bit drained from the Void, and getting a good night’s sleep would help us all recoup.

I would be challenging Keres in the morning. The thought had my stomach knotting and my heart rate doing a merry jig in my chest. Nerves were to be expected before any fight. But there was so much more riding on

this than any other battle I'd ever faced. I was jittery, energy surging through my body, making it difficult to settle down.

"My love." The sound of Jacobi's footsteps from behind had me spinning to face him. I tried to smile at him, but I was sure it looked more like a grimace. "The others are resting. Come, sit with me."

He held his hand out to me, and I took it without thought. The warmth I found there had me relaxing a fraction. Malachi was my rock, but Jacobi was my solace. I loved this male. I would kill for him. I would die for him.

"I can feel your nerves, my love." Jacobi spoke softly, not wanting to disturb the others. They were all sleeping soundly a few feet away. He pulled me down to sit on his lap, wrapping his large, strong arms around me tightly. "Tell me."

"There's just so much I don't know or understand about Jahmal," I said, leaning my head back against his shoulder. I continued to stare out at the horizon. "I trust that Daimon believes I can kill Keres. He wouldn't mislead me about that."

"But?"

"But..." I paused. "She engaged in underhanded tactics in the past. I should expect that from her again. What if she goes after all of you? I don't know all of the rules for this challenge."

Jacobi squeezed me and pressed a kiss to my temple. "We can defend ourselves, my love. Let her come for us."

A lump formed in my throat. My eyes stung. The thought of them in danger when I couldn't help...

"Shh," Jacobi soothed in a soft whisper against my ear. "You are not going to lose us. We will never leave you."

"You can't promise that." My tone was too aggressive for my liking, and I winced.

"No, I can't. I can't promise that we'll all get out of an altercation unscathed." He agreed. "But I can promise you that we are all bound so tightly that there is no way we will ever permanently leave you. Remember, my love, you held onto Winta's soul so tight you brought her back to you. Twice. There is nothing Keres can do that will cause us to truly leave you."

I clenched my hands into fists on my lap. "That's not good enough. Visa was gone for centuries before being reborn as Winta. Inara was dead for centuries before becoming Visa. Living without any of you for that long..."

“You would do it.” His tone is firm, not allowing room for any argument on my part. “Your other mates would get you through, and you wouldn’t stop searching for us until you found us. Do not let us become a liability.”

I flinched. He was right. I hated it, but he was completely right.

“Fine,” I bit out.

“Now. Let me love you, my mate. My queen.” A whisper of a kiss trailed from my temple to my cheek. “Let me worship you.”

I shuddered against him, and nodded in agreement. I needed to get out of my head, get some of this anxious energy out, and loving my angel king would be the perfect outlet.

One of his hands slid inside the waist of my pants, sliding until his fingers could circle my clit. The other hand ventured up my shirt to grasp my breast. My hips moved in time with his fingers to provide the perfect amount of pressure.

I raised my hands so I could tangle them in Jacobi’s hair, letting my nails lightly scratch his scalp. A fierce possessiveness raced through me when he shivered at my touch. I loved knowing how much pleasure I could bring to each of my mates. Loved knowing they were mine, and I was theirs.

Jacobi shifted me off of his lap, urging me to stand. He followed suit and started to rid himself of his clothes. I eagerly followed his lead. Gods, I needed to feel him against me. Inside me.

Once he was completely naked, I dropped to my knees before him, wrapping a hand at the base of his cock. He groaned and shuddered, his hands coming to fist my hair. There was so much love and devotion coming from him that tears pricked my eyes. I hoped he knew that I felt the exact same way.

Leaning in, I ran the tip of my tongue around the sensitive head bobbing before me. Jacobi issued a soft curse, his hips inching forward. He wasn’t demanding that I take him in my mouth, rather, he was letting me set the pace. Something he hadn’t done for quite some time. It made me smile before I wrapped my lips around him and sucked.

His gasp was music to my ears, a concert I could listen to for ages and never get tired of. My angel king remained rigidly still, only small movements escaping his iron control. A part of me wanted to see what it

would take to get him to lose that control. The other part was too present in the moment to care.

“Gods, my love.” He moaned. “I’m going to come.”

I instantly released him, dropping a kiss on the crown of his cock in goodbye. “That’s not where I need you.”

A soft growl was the only warning I got before I had a large angel diving at me. My laughter rang out as we fell back in a tangle of limbs, each of us touching and tasting whatever we came into contact with.

Eventually, I pushed against his shoulders, my breaths escaping me in a delightful combination of lustful pant and heady laughter. “I need you.”

Jacobi grinned down at me, a strand of his golden hair falling over his forehead and giving him a charming, boyish look. “How do you need me, my love?”

“Any and every way I can have you.”

His laugh was deep and joyous, and it pulled a smile from me. “We don’t have time for that unfortunately.”

I pouted. “You’re right. I will happily take you however you please, my king.”

Jacobi positioned me under him, and I wrapped my legs around his waist. I ran my hands up his arms before lacing them together behind his neck. We stared at one another for a long moment, everything we felt just passing through the bond.

When he finally thrust into me, it was slow and sweet. Every time I came together with my mates in the past was always with such fierce intensity, and I loved it. I needed it. I hadn’t realized until this moment that I needed this, too. I needed the soft sighs, low gasps, and simmering build of pleasure that came with the gentle rocking of hips.

Each thrust was firm and deep, and Jacobi made sure to angle his hips so he could brush my clit with each downward motion. Thanks to the slow pace, I could feel every inch of him as he moved. It had me seeing stars and clutching at him as though he were my saving grace.

“I love you, Ashera,” he murmured against my lips.

I gasped out a soft sob as I came, my back arching as pleasure seared its way through every nerve ending in my body.

“I love you, too.”



Caspian

WE WERE HEADING toward the Convocation's compound. I wouldn't call it a castle from what I could make out of the building jutting into the sky. A fortress was a more apt description. One built from stone and metal. While I was sure it was meant to look intimidating, based on everything I knew about the assholes who'd built it, it just screamed small dick energy. Rulers needed a safe haven, don't get me wrong, but this was just...gaudy.

Daimon explained that the original building had been smaller and more open. People had been encouraged to come to the Convocation for anything and everything. They were meant to be not just the strength of Jahmal, but the wisdom too.

The land around the fortress was barren. Hell, not even weeds grew here. Dirt and rocks, that was it. So depressing. Ashera studied everything with a trained eye, her posture rigid and ready for an attack. We were all poised to fight. Despite the fact that Daimon was adamant the people here were predominantly peaceful, we were on Keres's turf now. There was no guarantee of anything at this point.

A short wall, no more than ten feet tall, came into view surrounding the compound. It was clear that Keres wanted the fortress itself to be the intimidating focal point. There was only one guard stationed by the gate. I scoffed quietly to myself. There were so many mixed messages here. The one thing that was abundantly clear?

Keres was incredibly insecure when it came to her hold on the people of Jahmal.

That could play into our favor. It could also make Keres incredibly dangerous. Someone so insecure would be desperate. Desperation made people do unpredictable things and oftentimes against the rules. I was going to keep a close eye on her and anyone associated with her. I would make sure to tell the others to do the same.

"Okay, goddess." Daimon stopped our group with a gentle hand to Ashera's shoulder. "The guard is going to stop you and ask your business. Loudly and clearly announce that you wish to issue a challenge. Once those words are out of your mouth, they are magically bound not to harm you until the challenge has finished."

Dick slayer's hands clenched at her sides, but she nodded with a determined gleam in her eyes. Pride swelled in my chest as I looked at her. I

couldn't believe I had tried to fight our bond as hard as I did. There was no doubt she was a worthy mate. But was I?

I hadn't really acted like it. But I was trying to change that. I *would* change that. For her.

She was the light in the dark. I would do anything to make sure that flame never went out.

"Anything else?" She asked. "You haven't really told us much about the challenge rules."

"They vary challenge to challenge." Daimon explained with a frown. "The main rules: once someone has stated their desire to issue a challenge, no one—not even Keres—is allowed to harm the challenger prior to the challenge. If an attempt is made, the person or persons responsible die. The challenge itself takes place within a magically sealed circle so there's no outside interference. You aren't allowed to use outlawed magics. But aside from that, any other specifics are to be determined by you when you issue your challenge. Keres can't make any stipulations."

"Okay." Ashera blew out a breath. "Should I set any stipulations?"

"That's up to you, goddess. You could say no magic, no weapons, whatever you want." Daimon shrugged. "Keres's main trait is witchcraft. You might want to specify that she can't bring a controlled being into the ring with her. Since they're dead, I feel like they wouldn't count as outside help. But I'm not entirely sure."

"Okay. Alright. Good. I can do that." She took a deep breath. "I'm going to allow her to use magic. I want to defeat her at her best. I know that might sound stupid..."

"No, dick slayer." I drew up beside her, taking her hand in mine. I loved seeing the drastic contrast between our bodies. She was soft where I was hard. Her golden skin shimmered against my dark black tones. We fit so perfectly. "It doesn't sound stupid. You've always been far more honorable than the rest of us."

There was a chorus of agreements behind me.

"It's less about her and more about how you'll appear to Jahmal. You want to show them your strength. If you limit the fight too much, well, people might doubt you. But if you take her on full-force..."

"I show them just how powerful I am," she finished with a bright smile.

"Exactly." I framed her stunning face with my hands and pressed my forehead to hers. "Let them see how unstoppable you are."



Ashera

THIS WAS IT. I was about to formally issue Keres a challenge. This bitch was going down. After all the heartache and terror she caused, it was finally time for her to pay the price. I rolled my shoulders as we closed in on the lone guard at the gate.

The male tensed as he saw us approach, confusion stamped across his face at seeing two gods and several denizens of Dunya together. I'd let my wings out after talking with Daimon and Caspian. I didn't want there to be any doubt about what I was. That also meant releasing the stranglehold I kept on my power, causing it to radiate off me in palpable waves.

"Who goes there?" The guard stepped to block our path through the gate, pulling his sword from its scabbard at his side. "What brings you here?"

We stopped as one. I loved the show of unity from my mates. They were finally working together. It just took my possible imminent death. Totally fine, though.

"I'm here to challenge Keres." My voice rang clear and strong in the air around us. I felt the tingle as magic worked its way around me. Daimon had told me a challenge was magically binding, but I hadn't expected to be able to feel it.

"Understood." The male nodded. "Follow me."

I shot a glance back at my mates, all of whom gave me encouraging looks. I shot them a smile before turning back to the guard. He started forward, not looking back. Walking into the courtyard reminded me of Sahira. The only people milling about were soldiers. Where the hell were all the people?

I shot a glance at Daimon in question. He shook his head. Awesome. My nerves danced in a chaotic rhythm the closer to the keep we got. I wanted to question why the people were content to live like this—scared and hidden in their homes—but I knew.

People never truly realized how much power they had when they came together. The ruling class was always excellent at keeping the people divided amongst themselves. If the people focused on their differences and

fought each other, they didn't have the time or energy to go against the status quo. It was the perfect method to take power and keep it for a small population that didn't deserve it.

The nerves that had been skittering through me changed. Rage at the injustice of it all soared through me. I knew this feeling well. It had seen me rip a weak man's head off and take Shaytan's throne for myself. It had driven me to free an entire race of people. To push the other kingdoms in Dunya to do the same, not taking no for an answer.

Jahmal may not have slaves any longer, but its people weren't free.

The guard paused at large, stone doors. Two more males in armor stood to either side, both of them looking at us with curiosity written on their faces. Clearly, they didn't get many visitors here.

"She has issued a challenge." The first guard said, gesturing to me.

They snapped to attention at that. I'd been keeping a short leash on my empathic abilities up until this point. Now, my own curiosity had me extending the power toward the three guards.

These large males were all terrified. The knowledge had my eyebrows shooting up in surprise. That was an interesting reaction. Would they be punished for this? It wasn't something they could control. I knew that wouldn't matter. Not to someone like Keres.

The guard that had accompanied us from the gate abruptly spun on his heels and trekked back the way we came. The other two shot each other a quick, alarmed look before opening the door.

A long, dark hallway stretched before me that ended at a brightly lit, circular room. I could hear voices, but the light was too strong to make out how many were there. Based on the power I felt, that was where we were going.

"That's the meeting room," Daimon murmured, confirming my thoughts. "They should all be there."

The guards nodded, not moving to lead us down the hall. We were on our own. Not surprising considering their fear spiked as soon as the doors had swung wide. They did not want to be caught dead with us in that room.

I let that knowledge lift my chin higher and push my shoulders back. I was a fucking queen. I wouldn't be reduced to anything less. Waving my hand so my mates fell into formation behind me, I took a deep breath and started to walk.

My footsteps echoing down the hall was a deliberate decision. I wouldn't hide. The Convocation would hear us coming for them. They would soon realize that our footsteps signaled their impending doom. Their reckoning was coming, and there was no place for them to hide.

Stopping only when I reached the center of the room, my eyes took a moment to adjust. The reason it was so bright in here became readily apparent. The walls were covered from floor to ceiling in reflective golden panels. How did the Convocation get anything done in here? No wonder they were useless. There were a total of nine chairs evenly spaced throughout the room. Eight smaller ones, and then a larger, more ornate chair directly in front of me.

High pitched laughter echoed throughout the room, originating from that large chair. The female perched there was slender, and looked as though a stiff breeze could knock her over. Her facial features were conventionally attractive, but the expression she wore—as though she'd eaten something incredibly sour—made her vastly unappealing. Her dark eyes flashed with hatred as she stared at me, that annoying laugh continuing to slip past her thin lips. She had dark hair that ended abruptly at her chin and was pin straight.

Keres.

"Tell Collum that he's to be executed in the morning." Even her voice was high pitched and annoying. Gods, I felt bad for everyone in here having to listen to her all day. Maybe killing them would be considered a favor after thousands of years of having their hearing assaulted in such a manner. "Clearly, Ashera did *not* die in the Void."

"Nope." I popped the p with a shit eating grin. "I'm very much alive."

Keres returned her attention to me with a glare. "Yes, I can see that."

"And I'm sure you can also feel the magic." I crossed my arms over my chest.

"Unfortunately," she said through her teeth.

"The only exception I put on the challenge is that you can't use any dead bodies," I said simply. "But I think it's time we end things between us once and for all."

Her hands fisted on the arms of the chair, her body tense and practically vibrating with rage. It was a good thing the magic that ruled the challenge prevented her from attempting to harm me. There was no doubt in my mind

that she would have launched herself at me, or had soldiers rush into the room to kill us all without it.

She knew she wasn't strong enough to take me one-on-one, and that thought terrified her. Her fear slid through the room, widening my grin.

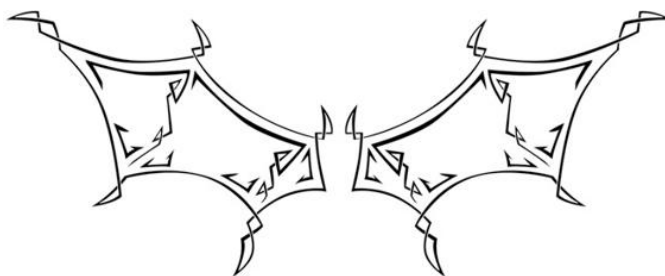
"At dawn." Keres clapped her hands and several guards appeared. "Show them to a room. They are not to leave."

As we were being escorted deeper into the building, she shouted, "And make sure they're fed. Last meal and all that."

I snorted. Right.

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MALACHI



We were led to a sparse, cold room that had several small beds pushed up against the walls. There was a fire pit—with a fire already lit—in the center of the room. It would take a while for such a small flame to heat such a large room, but we could move the beds closer to the center to ensure we weren't cold while we slept.

"Do we want to take bets on whether or not someone is going to try to kill me before tomorrow?" Ashera asked brightly as she looked around the room.

"If they do, they die." Daimon grinned. I had no doubt that psycho wanted to watch people die just for the fun of it. If I was being honest, I wouldn't mind watching any of the assholes here just drop dead either.

"How are you with energy, Sher?" I moved to the only other door in the room, opening it to reveal a tiny bathroom. It appeared we'd be taking turns bathing.

"I'm fine. The Void didn't take much from me. Is everyone else okay?" She sounded worried, so I closed the door to address the issue.

"You don't need to worry about us." I gently tugged on the end of her braid to gain her full attention. "You only need to worry about yourself. We're all going to stick together, so we'll be fine."

"But you guys aren't protected the way I am. Keres can send someone to kill any of you." Her eyes hardened at the thought. "I'll send their head back to her so she knows better than to fuck with what's mine."

Gods, I loved it when she was a vicious little thing. Chuckling, I pulled her into a loose hug. "While I'm sure we're all grateful that you would be

such a stalwart defender of our honor, you won't be wasting energy needlessly like that."

She glared up at me, and when she went to argue, Daimon cut in. "No, goddess. He's right. She wants you to be weak. She knows it's the only way she can possibly win. So we need to keep each other safe."

"Are you going to get pulled back to the Void?" Winta asked.

Fuck, I'd almost forgotten about that.

"I've been able to stay longer and longer. So I shouldn't be pulled back during the challenge." The god moved to stand by the fire. "I'll do everything I can to get back as soon as possible if I'm pulled away."

"Whatever plan we make, we should make sure there's a backup plan without Daimon involved," Thorne said. "We need to be prepared for anything."

I nodded, releasing Ashera to head over to the shifter general. "Why don't the rest of you relax? Thorne and I will figure things out."



Judah

ASHERA WENT into the small bathroom, the sound of water filling up the tub was faint but welcome. I was new to the whole mate thing, but my instincts were screaming at me to take care of her. I just wasn't sure what that looked like.

I tapped lightly on the door, fighting back my racing heart when she told me I could enter. This bathroom was the smallest I'd ever seen. Ashera was curled up in the bath, her golden skin calling to me as I was unable to pull my gaze away from watching several water droplets make their way down her body.

"Judah?" Her soft questioning voice pried my eyes away from the tantalizing droplets. I gulped quietly and sat on the toilet. "Is everything okay?"

I ran my hand down my face, pleased to feel smooth skin instead of the years worth of growth that had been there until recently. "Yes. No." I shook my head. "What I mean is..."

Her soft giggle had me blushing. I wasn't great with females before my imprisonment. Seventy-five years alone certainly hadn't helped me any. I grimaced, feeling inadequate.

"Hey." Ashera's hand snagged my fingers, the soft sloshing of the water in the tub following her movements. "None of that."

I blinked at her. "What?"

The crooked smile she sent me was incredibly charming. So much so, I found myself smiling back at her despite myself.

"I can feel your emotions, Judah." She gently squeezed my hand. "I can't think of anyone more deserving of love than you. I am honored and proud to be your mate."

I could feel the blush spreading down my neck. Still unsure of myself, I stared at our clasped hands. I came in here because I wanted to take care of my mate in some way. I should have thought this through before barging in. Now, I was making things painfully awkward. I should have had one of the others come to stand in the doorway. It was easier to fade into the background when I wasn't the only person in sight. I could observe and then mimic. Gods, I had so much catching up to do.

"Judah?"

"I did it again, didn't I?" I frowned, angry at myself for getting lost in my mind once again.

"I actually find it endearing," Ashera admitted. My gaze flew to her face in disbelief. "You're perfect just the way you are."

I snorted.

She splashed me with some water, the small wave hitting me square in the chest. "Oh no! I ruined your clothes."

I went to reply when I saw the sly look that crossed over her features. I chuckled and took my shirt off.

"Get in with me."

"That tub is tiny. I won't fit." Ashera giggled and wagged her eyebrows at me. I realized what I'd said and laughed along with her. "Fine. Don't complain if this doesn't work."

"It'll work."

I quickly removed the rest of my clothes, and Ashera stood, moving to one side of the tub. I eased myself down, keeping my knees bent to fit as much of me under the water as possible. My lovely mate—clearly having no issues being pressed in close to me—moved to straddle my lap with her legs

wound tightly around my waist. My hands, clearly having a mind of their own, slid around her so her chest was flush against mine.

“See? It worked.” Her bright smile at her declaration had my heart skipping a beat.

Ashera wrapped her arms around my neck, her fingers playing with the ends of my hair that had slipped free from my bun. My body relaxed bit by bit under her attention. Hers, too, softened the longer we held each other. I hadn’t realized how comforting it could be just...being.

“I was hoping I could do something for you.” My admission came out in a soft whisper as I locked eyes with her. “Something only a mate could.”

The shock that flickered through her eyes had me shifting uncomfortably, but that was quickly followed by a raw vulnerability. She nibbled on her bottom lip as she contemplated what I confessed.

“I was worried, when we first finalized the bond,” she started slowly, keeping her voice to the same soft whisper I’d used. “I was worried that you would see the mate bond as another form of imprisonment. You’d just gained your freedom after seventy-five years, I didn’t want to be the one to take that away from you.”

I scoffed before I could think better of it. “Hardly. Finding my mate has always been one of my most important goals.”

“Really? But you were engaged to Winta.” Her gaze searched mine.

“I had been looking for a way to get Winta out of that when I was taken. I had wanted to find my mate, and wanted the same for her.” I chuckled. “Funny how things work.”

Ashera leaned in to press her forehead against mine, a soft sigh left her lips. Her body wiggled closer, so I clutched her tighter, basking in the heat of her skin. It was so soft and smooth, such a contrast to mine. I hadn’t quite filled in to what I’d been before, so I was a bit more pointy than I would have liked. My hip bones would probably bruise the delicate sink of her inner thighs.

“Daimon said that Keres’s dominant trait was a witch’s power?” I wanted confirmation. I sometimes found myself having trouble determining actual events from those I made up in my mind.

“Yes.” Her head tucked itself onto my shoulder.

“You haven’t manifested witch abilities yet, have you?” I leaned my head against hers and closed my eyes.

“No. Not yet. Though I’m sure I will soon now that we’ve finalized our bond. If I hadn’t had the abilities before, it didn’t take long after mating with the others for my abilities to come through. Although, I haven’t shifted yet. I’m not sure if I can.”

“You may take other traits from the shifters if it’s not as prominent for you.” My mind whirled with the possibilities. This was all so fascinating. “Is it okay if I explain how our abilities work?”

“I would like that.” I felt her lips tug up into a smile against my neck.

“When a soul dies, its natural inclination is to enter the reincarnation process.” She nodded. “We can interrupt that process or stop it entirely. If a witch is present at the moment of death, we can pull the soul from the body and use it to fuel our magic. We typically carry gems with us. They’re conduits that allow us to hold onto souls we’re not ready to absorb yet.

“To pull a soul from a body is mostly intuitive. You should feel the tether between body and soul snap at the moment of death. Ideally, your witch abilities will kick in. It should feel like this overwhelming urge to inhale.”

“So I’m trying to *suck* the soul out of the body?” The amusement in her voice had me chuckling.

“Basically.” I shrugged. “From there, you can do several things. You can absorb it, you can contain it, you can put it back in the body to control the body, or you can destroy it. Since you’re a goddess, I’m sure there’s more you’ll be able to do. It seems that your abilities have a broader range than ours.”

What could Ashera do with a soul? Would she let me watch and record? My fingers itched to grab a quill and paper. I wanted to document everything. There was so little known about the gods. Daimon had revealed so much, but I knew there was still a vast amount of knowledge still out there. Did they have libraries in Jahmal? That felt like a silly question, but...

The soft press of lips against my neck jolted me, physically and mentally, back to the here and now. My hands clenched into fists against Ashera’s back with my anger at myself. How long would I be like this?

“I love feeling your mind work through the bond.” I stilled, tilting my head at an awkward angle to gawk down at my mate. “It’s thrilling.”

No one had called my mind thrilling before. With a deep inhale, I forced my hands to relax, and I ran them up her back. She shuddered against me,

her hips pressing down against mine a bit more firmly. Had...Had feeling the churning of my thoughts...turned Ashera on?

“There’s something incredibly delicious about a man who prefers to bury his nose in a book over holding a sword.” Her teeth scraped against my collarbone, and I groaned.

“Is there?” I rasped. My hands drifted to her hips, and my fingers dug into the skin there.

“Absolutely.” Bright, emerald green eyes met mine. “It tells me that man knows how to dedicate himself entirely to a single topic for however long it takes to find the answers.”

I nodded, mute and struck dumb by the heat I saw burning in her gaze. When had her hands moved? My hips lurched of their own volition when her hand closed around my cock. I swallowed down a muffled curse at the slow, soft stroke she gave me.

It had become second nature to ignore the needs of my body. After all, you can only masturbate so much in a dark cell before it gets boring. So while I’d been hard since the moment I walked in to see Ashera naked in the tub, it hadn’t dawned on me to do anything about it.

Thank the gods I was mated to a succubus goddess.

“We haven’t been alone,” Ashera murmured as she continued her soft strokes. “I know you were worried about not knowing what to do the first time. Are you still worried?”

She wanted me to speak? I shook my head, trying to breathe in through my nose and out through my mouth. My body was painfully aware of every place our skin touched, each point of contact sending bursts of heat straight to my balls. I may not have the experience the others had, but I certainly had the enthusiasm.

Ashera brushed her lips against mine. “Tell me your most wicked fantasy.”

My eyes slid closed as my brain scrambled to process her request. Wicked fantasy? Fuck. I’d be happy just having her ride me in this tiny tub. Having her hands on me was more than I ever could have imagined not so long ago. This was pure bliss.

“Tell me what you want to do to me,” she prodded.

Something dark and feral uncurled within me. Hundreds of scenarios ran through my mind, each of them more intense than the last. We would

have time to get to them all. I knew that Ashera would defeat Keres tomorrow, so it was simply a question of where to start.

“Would the others watch?” The question was out before I could stop it. “We can’t leave the room, but I want you on a bed.”

“If I tell them to.” Her teeth nipped at my lips. “Do you want to make my other mates watch you as you make me scream your name?”

“Fuck, yes.”

Without another word, Ashera rose to her feet. I was once again mesmerized by the sight of water sliding down her skin. Only this time, I gave into the urge to lean over and lick at what I could reach. I reveled in the soft gasp that left her lips and the way her body shivered against my tongue.

She let out a teasing tsk and stepped out of the tub to open the door. I scrambled to follow her, my body already missing the feel of hers.

“Judah wants you all to take a seat, relax, and watch him have his wicked way with me.”

“This will be fun,” Caspian murmured with a wide grin on his face. I was surprised by the comment, he had come across as a bit of a prick.

“I love a good show,” Ambrose agreed, seating himself on one of the small beds. The others copied him.

Oh, gods. I wasn’t given time to get nervous because the next instant Ashera’s body was pressed against mine, her lips traveling over my chest. Turning my brain off to listen to my instincts was difficult, but I knew the results would be worth it. I just hoped I wasn’t awkward.

“I want to taste your dripping pussy,” I growled. “Get on the bed and spread your legs for me.”

“Yes, my king.” The use of my title instead of my name shouldn’t be arousing, but my cock twitched all the same.

With swaying hips that had her ass moving in a mouthwatering way, Ashera lowered herself onto one of the small beds, she remained sitting with a wicked smile on her lips. Her gaze locking on mine, she trailed her fingers up her body, circling her nipples. The sight had my heart rate skyrocketing, and my chest heaving as my lungs tried to drag in as much oxygen as possible.

“I said, spread your legs.” I didn’t recognize the gruff, low tone I used.

“I’m sorry, my king.”

With agonizing slowness, my mate spread her legs as wide as she could. All of us released soft growls at the sight of her pussy, ripe and glistening with her arousal. The scent of her was so strong, even my senses—not nearly as strong as the others’—could pick it up.

Forcing my legs to move with slow deliberate steps, wanting to keep the tension of the moment, was torture. I wanted nothing more than to rush to my mate, sink to my knees, and bury my head between her legs. But something else, that dark part of me that had started all of this, wanted to put on a show. It wanted to prove to the others that I was just as capable of making our mate scream as they were.

I stopped short, releasing a small amount of my magic to brush against Ashera’s folds, caress her clit. Tease her. The small, shocked gasp she released was music to my ears. I couldn’t wait to see what other sounds I could have slipping from those lush lips. Just me. No one telling me what to do. No one else touching her. Me. Just fucking me.

“Fuck,” Malachi snarled. “I can smell how wet she is.”

Daimon groaned his agreement.

Both males had their eyes trained on Ashera as her hips writhed on the bed. She had one hand propped behind her now, the other was toying with her nipples. Our gazes were still locked, though her eyes were now hooded with pleasure.

“Come for me, *mon âme*.” I sent a stronger pulse of power at her.

“Gods, Judah! Yes!” Her head went to fall back, but I stopped it with another wave of power. I wanted her eyes on me when she came.

“Keep your eyes open.” The command was curt, but it had the desired effect. Those stunning green eyes remained open and locked on me.

A soft cry left her lips as her body shuddered with her release. Her face was flushed with pleasure, her eyes glazed, and pride rippled through me. I’d done that to her.

Once her shudders had ceased, I lowered myself to my knees between her still spread legs. I pressed a light kiss against her inner thigh, the muscle twitching against my lips. She was so sensitive now. It was intoxicating.

“You’re going to come on my tongue now, *mon âme*. Once you’ve done that, you’ll come on my cock. And then I want to watch you come, one-by-one, on your other mates.”

“Fuck,” Ambrose drew the word out. “Daimon, he might be my new favorite.”

“That’s daddy, you fanged fuck.” Ambrose whimpered at Daimon’s harsh tone. “Don’t mouth off or you won’t get my knitting needles again.”

“Yes, daddy,” came the soft reply.

I tuned them out as I closed my mouth around Ashera’s clit, sucking on it as I slid two fingers into her pussy. Remembering the directions Malachi had given me the first time I did this, I crooked my fingers. The response was immediate. Ashera released a long moan and her hips pressed up against my face.

The taste of her on my tongue had pleasure bursting throughout my body. I didn’t stop to think about how I was feasting on Ashera, my body was too engrossed in chasing the soft gasps and low moans of her pleasure.

When her breathing hitched, I knew she was getting close again. I’d also seen how she responded when one of her mates wrapped their hand or tail around her throat. So I directed a stream of magic to caress her throat before wrapping around it. Based on my understanding of anatomy, I needed to squeeze the sides of her throat, not the front for maximum impact.

Ashera came, screaming my name to the heavens. I kept up, wanting to prolong her orgasm, and she began chanting my name like a prayer. It wasn’t until her body stopped twitching, and her breathing turned ragged that I removed my lips and fingers.

“Stand up.” My voice was low and rough.

She scrambled off the bed. I replaced her, laying down on my back. “Face your mates and ride my cock, *mon âme*.”

“Yes, my king.” I had to fist the sheets at my side, my cock throbbing painfully. That darkness wanted me to make her call me that all the time. The thought of this powerful female referring to me as her king...

As Ashera settled herself into position, I gripped her hips to help her angle herself to take me deep. Her hand reached down to position me at the entrance to her pussy. Fuck, she was so warm. I could feel her dripping on me already.

“Slow,” I ordered. “I want to watch that tight pussy swallow me up.”

A soft whimper met my demand, but she listened, and slowly sank down. My eyes rolled into the back of my head, and my hands started to knead the flesh of her ass. The soft flutters as her pussy clenched and released would surely drive me mad. My eyes fluttered open so I could continue to take in the sight of her glorious body against mine.

Once she was fully seated on my cock, she paused, turning her head to look back at me. There was a question burning in her eyes. I groaned knowing she wanted me to tell her what to do next.

“Brace one of your hands on my chest. Show your mates how well your pussy takes my cock. Use your other hand to touch your clit. Move slow.” While I wanted to continue to keep my hands full with the soft skin of Ashera’s ass, I shifted my grip to her hips to help her move better.

“As you wish, my king.”

Her soft, delicate hand came to rest on my chest with just a hint of nail biting into the skin there. The change in position had my breath hitching. Shit. I wasn’t sure how long I could last.

Ashera started to rock her hips against mine with the occasional brush of her fingers against my dick as she rubbed her clit. I mirrored her rhythm, pushing her down a little harder with each stroke. My eyes slid closed so I could revel in the sensations she was wringing from my body.

My magic, without needing my direction, curled around her nipples and her neck simultaneously. It pulsed in time with Ashera’s movements and soon she was back to chanting my name. Her pussy started pulsing around me. She was close.

“Soak my dick, *mon âme*,” I urged. “I need you to come on my cock. Now.”

“Yes! Gods, yes!”

The feel of her tightening around me had stars bursting behind my eyelids. I couldn’t stop my own release even if I wanted to. I would have rather died than stop.

I roared her name, keeping her pressed against my hips as I emptied into her. Both of us were breathing heavily when I loosened my grip, though I didn’t let her climb off me just yet.

“Do you think you’re ready for more?” I teased with a dark chuckle. “Because I told you how tonight was going to go.”



Ashera

THE FACT that Keres wanted the challenge to take place at dawn was bullshit. Nothing should happen this early in the morning. It just reaffirmed my belief that morning people were all a bunch of evil assholes.

Stifling a yawn, I trudged down the hall to the Convocation's circular meeting room. My mates followed behind me, all of them silent and on alert. I fed well last night. Taking each of my mates separately allowed me to have more energy to feed off of than that orgy in the forest. Unfortunately, it left little time to sleep. Which was a habit that was annoyingly becoming normal.

Once I ripped this bitch's head off, I was going to sleep for a week. No one could argue with me. I'd be the head god or whatever.

Thankfully, the light in the room this morning wasn't quite as harsh as it was yesterday. Did they just blind unannounced visitors then? That was fucking rude. Once we were all in the center of the room, the doors slammed shut. Okay. So my mates couldn't leave if things went sideways. Good to know.

"We are here to witness a challenge between Ashera and Keres. Once the challenge begins, it will only end when one party has died." The instructions were announced by a god to my right, but I wasn't willing to take my gaze off my opponent. She hadn't made herself visible until the rules were being spoken. "A protective barrier will be erected around the challengers. Ashera has dictated that Keres is not to use the resurrected during this challenge. Neither party is allowed to use illegal magics, to do so will result in immediate forfeiture of the challenge with execution to follow. Similarly, neither party is allowed outside help of any kind. Do the parties have any questions?"

Both of us shook our heads.

"In that case." The speaker clapped their hands, the boom created far louder than expected.

The room changed, morphing into a large arena. The center was circular, like before, but instead of the chairs that had lined the wall, there was now open space. Benches were set back a safe distance from the fighting circle.

I glanced back at my mates, shutting down my empathic abilities. I couldn't afford to be distracted. I was doing this for them. For us.

"I love you," I said to them all. "Always."

In unison, they clapped their hands to their chest. “Long may she reign!”

I rolled my eyes, masking the flood of emotion I felt as they turned to take their seats. Several guards took spots close by. I was thankful Mal and Thorne had come up with several plans in case Keres wanted to use them to distract me.

My attention turned to the ring. Keres was already standing close to the edge. This was it. The bitch was going down.

With a deep breath, I stepped onto the ring. A wall of magic shimmered into place around us. I could still see and hear those outside the barrier, which was a small blessing. I didn’t want to have to waste precious energy wondering what was happening to my mates.

“Remember.” The male who had given us the rules shouted. “This is a challenge to the death. Begin!”

Keres threw out a hand, a glittering sword solidified in her palm. “I’ve been looking forward to this for so long.”

My lips tilted into a smirk. “Funny. I heard you couldn’t seem to do the job yourself last time.”

That hit a nerve. Her face became a mask of fury as she launched herself at me. It was easy to sidestep her. I drew my blades from my back holster, slapping them out against her sword to taunt her. It quickly became clear that she wasn’t used to fighting with a sword.

“Are you purposefully missing me?” I asked in a bored tone. “Is this your strategy? Bore me to death?”

The goddess skidded to a halt, her chest rapidly rising and falling—whether in anger or from physical exertion I couldn’t be sure. The sword in her hand disappeared. Was she about to get serious? Fuck, I hoped so.

Keres thrust her hands out, pieces of the fighting ring lifting into the air and flying at me. I tilted my head, fisting my hands. They crumbled inches from my face. I didn’t want to get cocky, but she wasn’t putting up as much of a fight as I thought she would.

With a slash of my hands, I ripped the ground beneath her feet open. She was able to jump away at the last minute, but I saw the flicker of surprise on her face. Maybe Daimon’s theory about me having more mates this time around making me stronger held merit.

I tried to pull her energy from her, the way I’d done so long ago in front of Ambrose. I was able to get some from her, but it wasn’t enough to kill

her. I shouldn't be surprised. Twirling my swords, I decided to just get this over with. I could toy with her, draw out her pain, but the longer she drew breath the more annoyed I became.

But I couldn't resist getting in one last dig. "You know, you did me a favor with Jareth soul. I wouldn't be nearly as powerful if I didn't have so many mates. This wouldn't have happened without you."

Keres screamed her rage and the ground shook. I glanced down, trying to determine what she was doing. The floor beneath me wasn't splitting up, there were no chunks flying at me. The sound of grunts and steel clashing from behind me almost had me turning my head.

But we'd planned for that. We knew the only way she could win was if she cheated. We knew my mates would be her target. She wanted me distracted and weakened. She wasn't going to get it.

My muscles coiled as I prepared myself to spring at her. The fastest way to help my mates—though I knew they could handle themselves—was to end this. Neither one of us had taken any blows, and we'd only used minor magic. This should have been more of a challenge. I didn't care.

With a scream of my own, my body flew into motion, every part of me honed in on the goddess before me. My blades flashed as I swung them for her head.

Except...It wasn't Keres that was cut down by my blades. I slammed to a halt, staring down in confusion at the body crumpled at my feet.

"What?"

That high pitched laughter had me spinning on the balls of my feet, knives up at the ready. Keres stood there, surrounded by the bodies she had possessed with her magic. I snarled. I should have known she would cheat.

"How did you get them through the barrier?" I growled.

"The barrier doesn't stop me from using magic. It just keeps things contained within it." She shrugged, a twisted smirk tugging at her face. "You set the stipulation, yes. The Convocation won't be able to do a damn thing about it once I'm through with you."

I raised a brow in question. "Is that so?"

"I am the strongest in all of Jahmal!" she shrieked, spit flying from her lips.

Gross. She had this crazed look on her face, one that told me she'd been too far gone for quite a while. Killing her would be like killing a rabid

animal. I just needed to get to her through the mass of dead bodies she was using as a shield.

Judah hadn't said whether or not I could rip the souls out of these bodies. What tethered them now? Keres's magic? If I couldn't remove the souls from the bodies, I'd have just cut them all down. There were roughly fifteen of them now. There was no way to tell if she had more.

There wasn't a lot of room to move in the ring now, and I couldn't cross the barrier. I tucked my blades back into their holsters. It would take too long to take them out like that. Shoring up my stance, I concentrated my magic on the ground under Keres's flesh shield.

With a vicious rip of my hands into the air, a massive hole opened up and several of the bodies immediately disappeared. They weren't overly fast, so those around the edges just toppled right over.

That launched Keres into action, and the remaining bodies started after me. A blast of magic slammed me against the barrier, my head cracking with a distinct thud. Fuck. That hurt. I blinked the pain away. That hadn't come from Keres.

One of the bodies was lowering its hands.

Can Keres control their magic? That was...not good.

Another blast of magic came hurtling toward me. I dodged, throwing my own blast of magic out at the bodies.

Enough dicking around. Now I was just plain pissed. The bitch had given me a headache.

I launched through the bodies, taking the hits of magic and weapons as they came, my only focus was getting to Keres. Her eyes widened when she realized I wasn't stopping. I wasn't slowing.

Turning my magic inward, I increased my forward momentum, skidding to a stop inches from Keres's face.

"Game over." I spat in her face.

The shock written on her face would remain there. The sound of my panting coupled with my thundering heart rang in my ears. I kept my gaze locked on Keres, no longer worried about what was left behind me.

It took what felt like an eternity for her body to collapse to the ground, but I felt it. That moment Judah had described. Keres's soul had detached from her body. That overwhelming urge to inhale came over me, so I went with it.

If I hadn't been aware of what I was doing, I would have assumed I was looking at smoke. Huh. Not exactly how I pictured a soul. Judah hadn't told me how I could destroy a soul, so I went with my instincts.

Keres would never be reborn. She would never get the chance to do to others what she had done to me and my mates. Never again. With a clench of my fist, her soul was ripped to shreds, and it faded into nothing.

"Are you going to eat that, goddess?"

My gaze snapped over to Daimon, who was covered in blood and grinning like an idiot. He gestured to my hand.

"Are you going to eat that?" He repeated.

I blinked, glancing down at my hand. Nestled in my palm was Keres's heart. When I looked back up, Daimon was closer and had puppy-dog eyes.

"Goddess?" He blinked at me, trying to look as cute as could be.

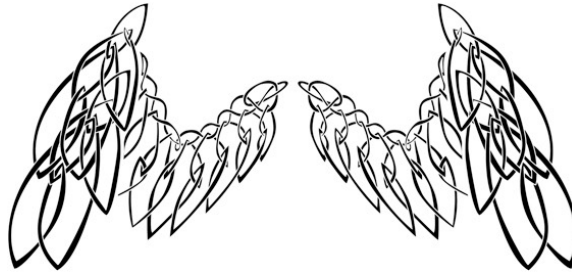
"No. I wasn't planning on eating it." I held it out. "Would you like it?"

Lightning fast, Daimon snatched the heart from my hand and bit into it. "You should at least cover yourself in her blood a little more. Do you want help?"

The laugh that ripped from my throat was a surprise, given what had just happened. "Why don't you slather me in blood while you tell me what happened out here."

"Sounds excellent." Daimon knelt down and painted his hands in Keres's blood as my other mates made their way toward me. Each one of them was blissfully alive. Each one was also covered head to toe in blood.

DAIMON



I t had been so damn arousing watching Ashera rip Keres's heart from her chest, her body painted in the blood of her enemy like the warrior goddess she was. I was still a bit upset that she wouldn't let me fuck her into oblivion right then and there. So after those pompous assholes had declared her the victor, we set about finding someplace to fuck and sleep. Ashera decided she didn't want to stay at the Convocation's compound. Not that I could blame her.

I wasn't sure I had ever been more proud of my mate than after her challenge with Keres. She had been through so much, from traveling through the Void, losing her mates, and battling her way against difficulty over difficulty, and yet here we stood. The after. Safe. She was not only the queen of Dunya now, but the queen of the gods and goddesses too. Her true place, the rightful ruler. One who would protect all people – no matter their species – and would watch them rise up to their full potential, smiling at them as they did so.

And she was mine. My mate. I wanted to show her off to everyone in Jahmal and Dunya, and let them know exactly who she was and what she had done. Because the fact of the matter was most people in Dunya would never know what Ashera had risked for them. They would never know Ashera had challenged Keres, taking her on after centuries of not knowing her true power. They would only know her as their queen, and respect her as such. But knowing her true story? That was for us to know.

We sat in Jahmal the next day, all of us together, enjoying a moment of peace. A moment of knowing that nothing was coming for us, and we could

take the time to just be together. I sighed, tipping my face towards the sun. Even Jahmal seemed more beautiful since Keres's defeat. The sun shone brighter. The grass looked greener. My mate was even more stunning than she had been only the day before. Everything was just...better.

"So what's next?" Mal asked.

Ambrose groaned, flopping his arm over his face. "Come on, bat fuck. Can't we have five minutes of peace before we have to do something? This is the first time in ages no one is trying to kill us, and I'd rather enjoy the moment before we go and ruin it with more plans."

Malachi laughed, and I couldn't help but join in. "There's a lot of things that need to be dealt with now," the incubus said. "We can't just let them slide. There's a lot of people relying on us."

Ambrose groaned. "Fuck's sake."

Ashera laughed this time, getting up from where she was laying in the sun and going to sit next to Ambrose. She tucked herself into his shoulder, resting her head against his chest. "You know I love you, right? But Mal is right. There's a lot of things that need to be taken care of. And then we can rest."

"Five minutes," he muttered. "All I asked was for five fucking minutes."

"We can't all get what we want, princess," Ashera quipped. She pressed a quick kiss to his chin and then turned back to the rest of us. "The major issue is that we aren't able to be in all these different places at once, unless we're willing to be separated some of the time."

Everyone immediately protested, mine being the loudest. I hadn't gone through all of this to only be separated from my mate again. Absolutely not. "Try again, goddess. Something that doesn't involve us being apart. I don't think anyone is willing for that to happen."

Ashera held up her hand with a smile, and we all quieted. "I'm not willing to be separated either. But both countries need a ruler, Jahmal and Dunya. We can't leave them alone. Everyone is in good spirits right now, but what if someone like Keres comes around again? We can't afford to let anything slide."

I mused the thought for a minute. "We could...we could always take down the Void. Let the countries be one, like they used to be."

I could feel all the surprised faces around me turning to stare. "You can do that?" Ashera asked.

“Of course I can do that! Why do you think they made me watch the Void as punishment? That old girl and I go way back.” I grimaced thinking of all the shit she had put me through over the centuries.

“Um, Daimon. Why didn’t you just take the Void down in the first place then?” There was confusion in her voice, and I could understand it.

But all I did was shrug. “I really didn’t want to see Keres’s ugly mug on a daily basis, so I figured it would be best left up. Besides, I needed your help to take it down unless I wanted to knock myself out for a decade. And I had no intentions on pulling a Caspian.” I looked over to the fae and waggled my eyebrows. I got a choice finger in return, and laughed. “No, but seriously. To take it down easily, I’ll need your help. But then wham bam, there’s not two countries anymore. Just one.”

She nodded, thinking. “That could work. But what about all the kingdoms? We can’t spend so much time away from them all. They deserve to have full time rulers, not rulers who rotate around every few months or weeks.”

Jacobi cleared his voice. “Actually, my love, I have an idea for that. I was thinking...what if each of us names a ruler in our place? I’ll step down as king of Malak, and the same for each of the others.”

Quiet nods and murmurs of assent rounded the group. It seemed none of the men or women had issues stepping down from their positions of power.

“You would do that for me?” Ashera whispered.

“Of course we would, dick slayer. Besides, it’s not like my father intends on kicking the bucket anytime soon. I’ll let him know to skip me, and to give the crown to my brother instead,” Caspian said. “The only crown that matters to me is the one that rests on your head.”

“And I’ll abdicate so my sister can take over,” Jacobi added. “It’s time Malak had a queen to rule them.”

“It’s better for the people,” I murmured. “It’s a fantastic idea. You’ll still rule, but you’ll have an individual ruler for each kingdom.”

Ashera nodded, straightening her back. “Judah? Ambrose? Winta? How do you feel about this idea? You’re all rulers in your kingdoms too.”

Judah was the first to speak up. “Sahira deserves a fresh start. They should elect their ruler. One that isn’t corrupt. I can head back there and organize an election, and from there step back. They’ve been running themselves for a while anyway with me being captured and all.”

“I have men who are loyal to me,” Ambrose said. “Who would do a much better job ruling than I ever could. I’m with you, little queen. No matter what.”

Winta nodded. “The same for me, precious. The people of Qamar deserve to have someone who will be there full time. One of our generals is perfect for the job.” From next to her, Thorne agreed.

I clapped my hands together. “So it’s decided then! You and I will remove the Void, and each current ruler will elect or nominate a full time ruler in their stead. You will rule over both countries.”

Ashera shook her hair back, shielding her eyes from the sun. In the bright daylight, her wings shone. “All of you...I want you to be my Convocation. I want us to make decisions together, and to make Dunya and Jahmal a wonderful place to live – for everyone.”

Everyone eagerly agreed, nodding and smiling. I could feel their emotions. If it meant they got to stay with their queen full time, and it was best for their people, they would do whatever she asked.

“But I still have one more question,” Ashera said. “Where will we live?”

I smiled, getting to my feet and tugging her up into my arms. “That’s an easy one. Wherever we want. Home isn’t a place anymore, goddess. It’s you.”



Ashera

TOGETHER, Daimon and I took down the Void. Dunya and Jahmal were together once more, like they had been all those moons ago. It felt like the best decision for them, like they had always been one. The day we took it down, nothing was out of the ordinary. No parades or celebrations were held. There were no wars or battles. People didn’t come from miles around to see us take it down. It was just myself and my mates, removing something that shouldn’t have been there in the first place. And once it was down, requiring less power than either of us realized. It felt like maybe the Void was ready to go, too. Like she had done her job, and now it was time for her to move on.

And so we did. We all moved on, eventually. We licked our wounds, and healed each other. We fucked hard, and loved harder. The Void fell, and Dunya and Jahmal became one again.

Each of my mates in power selected a new ruler in their stead. Men and women who were eager to rule their kingdoms, to bring them peace and prosperity. Elections were held in other kingdoms, the people getting to select their ruler for the first time in their lives. The people had power again. Not false power, but real strength. The ability to choose what they wanted to do in their lives, and to make changes where they saw fit. If they didn't like something, they could fix it. If they liked something, they could let it be known. Humans loved and were loved by different species. There was no hate. No prejudice. No reason to not appreciate being. There was only love.

We created a home for ourselves in the woods where Daimon's cottage once stood. It was the best place to oversee the joining nations, but I was still worried if my god would appreciate living somewhere he had been trapped for so long. But when I asked him, he only smiled and draped yet another scarf around my neck. "Goddess, I told you once, and I told you again. I'll live wherever you want to live. My only stipulation is that you're there."

So we built our home together. We made a life together. We did all the things that had been taken from us for so long.

I sighed and took a seat on the couch in the sunroom at the back of our house. I thought I was alone, but the sound of Malachi's laugh told me I wasn't as alone as I had thought.

"Why the long face, Sher? We have everything we ever wanted." He came and sat next to me, wrapping his arm around my shoulders. "And isn't it a beautiful fucking sight."

I looked out the large windows, looking to the forest beyond. The forest, filled with life and teeming with new beginnings. It really was a stunning vision in front of me. I was never as happy to have built our home where we did as when I was sitting in this sunroom. All of my mates loved spending time here too. They would read and joke, play games, and teach each other skills. Daimon would knit, and the others would make fun of him for it. We already had a blanket on every surface possible, but my god was unstoppable.

“I’m not sad,” I said. “If anything, I’m the most content I’ve ever been. Our people are safe. Happy. Learning to live on their own two feet again. The kingdoms are protected and at peace. The gods walk among us once more, and us amongst them. It truly is everything I’ve ever dreamed of.”

“But...” Malachi trailed off, and I smirked. My mate knew me too well. Even though Daimon had known me in previous lives, Mal had known me the longest in this one. He knew what made me tick, and when something was on my mind. And right now, there was no fooling him.

“Do you ever think that maybe...maybe we don’t deserve all of this good? Maybe we’re just waiting around, looking for the other shoe to drop?” I cocked my head to the side. “I don’t know why I was given all this power. Why I became queen of everything. And sometimes, when I look at it all, I just can’t help but think maybe there might have been someone better to do it. Someone who might’ve taken power with less bloodshed.”

“Oh, Sher,” Mal murmured. “My beautiful, wonderful, incredible, selfless mate. My queen. My goddess. Let me tell you something, and I want you to listen to me carefully, okay?”

I nodded, letting my head drop and rest on his chest. The quiet thrum of his heartbeat soothed me, calming my anxious soul. “I’m listening.”

“No one else could’ve done what you did. No one else. Because the gods chose *you*. I can’t tell you why they chose you, or why you had to go through as much heartache as you did along the way, but what I can tell you is that no one else could’ve done this. No one else could’ve brought together the species. No one else could’ve reunited Dunya and Jahmal. No one. You did the best job anyone could ever hope for. And yes, there were losses. There was tragedy, and there was some really fucking hard times. But look at it now. Look at *us* now. Wasn’t it all worth it?”

I sniffled, trying to not let his sweet words overwhelm me, but it was hard knowing just how much my incubus felt for me. How proud he was of me. Of everything we had accomplished. We had lived a thousand lives reuniting the kingdoms, and now we got to live a thousand more safe in each other’s arms.

“Sher?” Mal twisted, forcing me to look up at him. “I love you so godsdamn much. More than anything else in this world. And whenever you forget that, I’ll be here to remind you. I’ll be here to tell you exactly what good you brought to the world too.”

I couldn't stop the tears this time, and they spilled out onto my face. "I love you too, you stupid, stupid man."

I leaned forward and captured his mouth in a kiss. He kissed me back, pushing my hair away from my face. He pulled back for a moment. "I love you. I love you. I love you." He peppered each statement with a kiss down my neck, laying me back onto the oversized sofa.

I gasped, my back arching to meet his mouth, and I felt his hand slip under my skirt and between my legs. I knew what he'd find there – my unending desire for him dripping from my core.

As soon as Malachi found it, he hissed. "Always so wet for me, my little slut." He pulled at my dress, tugging it off and over my head, and I pulled at the leather pants he wore. He shucked them to the side, his impressive cock on display for me, and me alone.

As much as I loved sharing with my mates, the one on one time was nice. Mal and I didn't get a lot of it, with as busy as we were, so this was a special treat.

I reached up and stroked his cock, enjoying the way he moaned, and thrust into my hand. Just as I began to pick up speed, he paused my motions with his own hand. "Enough teasing, little slut. I need to fuck you. I need you to see exactly how special you are." Mal dropped between my legs, spreading my thighs, and fitting his cock right at my slick opening. "Do you feel how hard you make me, Shea? How desperate you make me to fuck you?"

I groaned, wiggling my hips so that he would push inside, but he held tight to my flesh.

"Not yet. I know my little slut needs me to fuck her, but I want to take my time." He slid in the first inch, and I cried out as I took him. And then he pushed in another inch, stretching me. And another inch, painfully slow.

Gods, I needed him. I needed him inside me now. But he wasn't budging. He kept pushing inside at a teasing pace, until all of him filled me up, and we were both out of breath, panting.

"And now I'll give you exactly what you need," he groaned. He pulled back and slammed into me.

"Oh, fuck, Mal, yes!" I cried, lifting my hips to meet him thrust for thrust. His hands were digging into the flesh on my hips, his cock driving deeper and deeper into me, and his energy was flooding mine, our auras blending until I couldn't tell them apart.

He was driving me closer and closer to release, pushing me until my orgasm was right there, but not letting me over that edge. “Do you feel how special you are now? How wild you make me? Gods, Sher, no one else could drive me crazy like this.”

I couldn’t breathe. I needed to come, and I needed to come now.

“I love you so godsdamn much. More than you’ll ever know,” he panted. He began to pick up speed, fucking me with a fury I didn’t know he still had in him. “Come now for me, little slut. Come all over my cock.”

With a scream, I shattered. “I love you. I love you!”

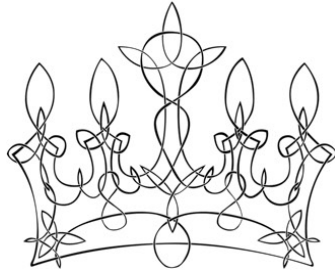
Malachi came with me, filling me with his release, pistoning his hips through both of our orgasms. Eventually he slowed, and we collapsed on top of each other, taking our fill of the sexual energy that filled the room around us.

Maybe I wasn’t certain it was supposed to be me all along. Maybe I still felt like someone could’ve done what I did better. But Mal was right about one thing. Everything I had done? It was all worth it in the end.

EPILOGUE - 15 YEARS LATER

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ASHERA



I t's funny how quickly we all fell into a routine. Our days became almost...normal. We fell into a pattern. Every night we'd fall asleep together, tangled up in our oversized bed we had custom made when the house was first built. The mornings were filled with visits from kingdom delegates, or our own meetings, and the afternoons were ours, and ours alone. Eventually the pain of what we had gone through faded away. And with the absence of that pain, space for new joy.

Joys like babies. So many babies. Babies upon babies upon babies. I wasn't sure if my mates were exceptionally fertile, or what the hell had happened, but here we were, fifteen years after that moment in the sunroom with Mal, and I was surrounded by children.

"Arabella!" I called. I caught the arm of the daughter I shared with Ambrose. "Where are Gideon and Casper?"

She shrugged a slim shoulder, running off to join her siblings playing in the forest. She was my oldest daughter, and the absolute apple of Ambrose's eye. In my opinion, she got away with far too much, but Ambrose wouldn't hear of it. At the end of the day, he was right. We had good kids. They were all well behaved and polite, when they needed to be. When they had too much energy, they tended to get into trouble. Which was why I was on the search for my two youngest boys today – twins, shared with Thorne. The boys, four years old, didn't have control over their shifting abilities yet. It meant sometimes we had a bear and a tiger running loose in the yard. Their siblings loved it, and often encouraged it, but the rest of us were trying to get them to learn how to keep it under control.

“Gideon! Casper!” I heaved myself off the couch, rubbing my swollen belly as I walked to the door that led out to the forest. “Boys?”

I was eight months pregnant with Daimon’s child, and feeling like I was at least eighteen months pregnant. I wasn’t sure what was in his sperm, but it felt like this child was twice the size of a normal baby at least. Daimon loved it. He would spend all night rubbing my belly if he could, speaking to the child in the language of the gods – a language I still had yet to master.

And it wasn’t just for his child either. He did it every time I was pregnant, whispering secrets I would never know to my belly, as the babies kicked and pushed away inside me. He just loved babies. Probably because it gave him an excuse to knit more baby blankets, booties and hats. The other mates had banned him from making any more blankets for the house, so the babies were the next best thing.

I smiled and walked further out into the forest. My oldest, Alaric, was standing off to the side with his bow and arrow, shielding his eyes from the sun. He was the spitting image of Mal, quiet and brooding at fourteen. He also looked out for his younger siblings. I smiled and squeezed his shoulders as I came to stand next to him. “See anything interesting?”

He shook his head with a small smile. “No, mother, I’m just waiting for father to come back. He told me he’d take me out for practice today. Arabella and Pandora ran off giggling though. I don’t know what they did, but I’m willing to bet Pandora talked Arabella into one of her schemes again.”

I laughed and shook my head. “I don’t doubt it.”

Pandora was a tiny wisp of a girl, mine and Jacobi’s daughter, and much to the angel’s chagrin – a troublemaker. Pandora really was the perfect name for her, because we had opened up Pandora’s box bringing her into this world. Her angelic beauty made her look absolutely innocent, which was even better when she was talking you into whatever she wanted. Sometimes it was an extra cookie after dinner, sometimes it was getting her siblings to rile up Gideon and Casper so they would shift. Jacobi would be pulling his hair out at night after she went to bed, wondering what he was doing wrong, and I would have to stroke his back, and reassure him that Pandora was a child. Children got up to mischief sometimes. She would outgrow it soon enough. But Jacobi, a grown adult who had never gotten into trouble his entire life, couldn’t understand. A literal angel.

Pandora was part angel, but she was also part succubus. And even as a child, she was learning how to manipulate her gifts to her advantage. A part of me was definitely proud. I was proud of all of my children, really. Even when they were misbehaving.

I followed Alaric's finger towards where he had seen the girls run off to. It didn't take me too long before I could hear quiet cries for help coming from a deep thicket of forest. "Mama? Mama!" I hurried as fast as my pregnant feet would carry me. Around the corner, Laurent was tangled in a mess of vines, his small face looking desperately for help. "Mama!"

I had to hold back laughter as I hurried towards him. "Laurent, what have you done?" I pulled through the vines easily, until he was standing in front of me, freed from his binds.

"I was trying to talk to the grass, and then all the sudden they were all tangled up in me and I couldn't stop them!" His face was so red and concerned, I couldn't help but give the small boy a hug.

Laurent was mine and Caspian's son, and still too young to have a good grasp on his elemental magic. "What did papa and I say about using your magic without us close by?"

He sighed, pouting. "Not to. But mama! The grass was talking to me!"

"Laurent," I warned. "You could get hurt!"

"Yes, mama." He leapt from my arms, brushing off his knees. "I'm going to go see what Alaric is doing. I bet he's doing something awesome."

I laughed and shook my head. Laurent was obsessed with the older boy, and followed him wherever he went. Hopefully, Mal would have enough sense in him not to bring the younger child out to target practice with them, but it could really go either way.

I kept walking, hearing giggling from up ahead. The girls must be close by. I walked out into a massive field, rubbing my belly. This baby was going to come sooner rather than later, especially if these kids kept me on my toes like they did. I nearly stumbled when I realized what was going on in the clearing.

Pandora was flying, using her small wings to lift both her and her sister up in the air. Next to them, Jacobi was encouraging her, telling her exactly how to gain more lift and strength in her wings.

"Jacobi?" I called. "What the hell is going on?" This wasn't like my logical mate. He was actively teaching his daughters to fly.

Jacobi smiled and jogged over to me. "I caught them flying last week out here by themselves. I figured if they were going to do it, the least I could do is teach them the proper technique." He looked over his shoulder. "Great job, Pandora! Open those wings a little bit wider and you'll catch the wind gust."

"Are they safe?" I asked, clutching my stomach.

He nodded. "Absolutely. I was about their age when I first learned to fly." He bent his head to my forehead, kissing me lightly. "I promise they are 100% safe."

I sighed. "Okay. But have you seen the boys? They're missing."

Jacobi tilted his head. "I thought I saw them back at the house, but I'm not entirely sure. They'll turn up though. They always do."

With one last kiss I turned and made my way back to the house. Thankfully, Alaric had put down his bow, and was climbing trees with Laurent. I walked into the dining hall where we took all our meals, but it was empty. The same with my office, and the library. I heard giggles from the playroom and I turned the corner hoping to see the boys. Instead, Valentina and Flora were in the playroom, their father, Judah, in front of them. Judah wasn't moving.

I wasn't worried that Judah wasn't moving. I knew he was fine. But why the girls were giggling, I was curious. "Girls? Why is your father unconscious?"

"Daddy taught us a new trick," Valentina said with a smile. "It makes him go to sleep. He said we weren't supposed to use it on him, but we couldn't help it."

I knelt to the floor, taking Judah's pulse. Definitely just sleeping. "Can you wake daddy up now?"

Flora pouted and groaned. "But that's no fun. Daddy is way more fun than you."

"Yes, well, daddy is only fun when daddy isn't magically unconscious. Wake him up please, or no dessert after dinner."

"Yes, mummy," they chorused. A small waggle of their brightly glowing fingers, and Judah shook himself awake.

"Girls," he scolded. "What did I say about using that spell on anyone other than your enemies?"

I kissed Judah's forehead, ruffled the girls' hair, and left him to discipline his daughters. I wasn't the one who had taught them spells I

shouldn't. He could deal with the fallout from his mistake.

There was only one place left for the boys to be. The kitchen. I tiptoed down the hall, wanting to see exactly what they were up to when they thought I wasn't looking but the kitchen was silent. "Boys?" I called. "Gideon? Casper?"

Silence.

Then, from the pantry, there was a quiet snore. And another one. I snuck up to the large pantry, taking a peek inside to see both boys curled up on the floor, fast asleep. It looked like they were standing on each other to reach the snacks on the top shelf, when they decided to take a nap instead. I smoothed back their hair from their faces, kissing their foreheads. They still had that last layer of baby fat to them, making them absolutely kissable.

I left the boys, making my way back to the sunroom. Everyone was safe, and happy. There were no battles to fight, and for the time being, no children to take care of. It was one of those brief moments I had all to myself, where I could just sit back and think about everything we had accomplished. At the end of the day, it didn't matter what we had gone through for us to get to this point. We had each other, and we had happiness, and that was all I could ever ask for.

THE FUCKING END

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Torri

Torri Heat has always loved control. Her mind was blown when she discovered she could control entire worlds through story writing. Throw some steamy romance in there, and it was pretty close to perfection. Torri loves dark heroes who ride off into the sunset on their motorcycles, fierce heroines who can fend for themselves, and a sprinkle of the paranormal just to keep things interesting. When she's not creating alternate realities you can find her managing her three ring circus of kids and animals at home. Torri is currently published under Changeling Press and you can find her e-books on Amazon, Kobo, Barnes and Noble, and Apple.

Beth

When Beth isn't creating fantastical words from the endless ether of mind, she's running around after the three small humans she created (her greatest craft project to date). She's always had a love of romance novels, the steamier the better, and decided to show her kids that it was never too late to chase your dream by publishing her first book in January 2021. Beth loves strong, fierce, and sassy FMCs, and alpha males who come to understand that their chest pounding ways aren't the best way to ladies' hearts. She also has a mild obsession with dragons, cats, and trash pandas.

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